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CURRENTS

*A QUARTERLY REVIEW
to explore the implications
of Christianity for our times*

DIRKS • POULET • DEMANT • WALZ
JOHNSON • SONNEMANN • LACROIX

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EDITORS

Joseph L. Caulfield
Alfred di Lascia

Sally S. Cunneen
Erwin W. Geissman

Assistant Editors: John J. Figueroa — Russell S. Young

Managing Editor: Joseph E. Cunneen

Address: 3111 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.

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THE ONE MESSAGE FOR ONE WORLD

WALTER DIRKS

The Christian mission has become entangled with the destiny of European-American imperialism.

It is possible for individual missions and missionaries to remain, and to continue to remain, completely free of the spirit of exploitation and spoliation—even from any consciousness of cultural superiority; they may in fact have enrolled themselves in the struggle against certain consequences of that exploitation. Nevertheless the intertwining of imperialistic and of Christian expansion is an historical fact. The mission in China is a current example. The tormented and exiled missionaries have been victims as often as they have been martyrs, caught and hanged in company with arrogant thieves as well as with Christ, often in quite indistinguishable confusion. It is frequently characteristic of martyrs in our day that they are at the same time expiatory sacrifices. (Even Mindszenty suffers for his beliefs and yet not for his beliefs alone.) This tragic coincidence does not seem to us to encumber true missionaries: they must use every opportunity, or almost every opportunity, to fulfill Christ's behest, "Go ye into the whole world,"—even into the ships of the conquistadors, even with the mercantile agglomerates of the capitalists. St. Francis used the ships of the Crusaders to force his way to the Saracens. But he who knows, and

can know, nothing of this errand of salvation—which indeed has meaning only through belief in the Savior of the whole world—must see in the missionaries the ideological accomplices of the white world-rulers. The civilizing aids, especially medicine and law, serve as neutral social means between political power and Christian belief; this middle realm aggravates the difficulty of making the necessary distinctions sharp enough. And when the enlightened non-white and non-Christian "underdeveloped peoples" become able to appreciate the fact that the missionaries are doing nothing evil but rather much good, that they bring with them physicians and medicines or culture or guidance in agriculture and manual arts—at this instant in history, in this hour of political emancipation, these peoples will then stand at the point where they are able to save and enlighten and guide themselves; and by the same token the civilizing and moralizing function of the missions will have attained its goal.

And so the hour of the modern Christian mission has struck. Five hundred years come to an end—The "End of modern times"* is the end of the missions as we know them.

We do not know them very well. We often know them only through mission propaganda.

I do not really know how the situation is in regard to the evangelical churches. In regard to the Catholic Church the true greatness of the missions is often hidden in the hearts of the mission candidates, in their quiet

Walter Dirks is the author of THE MONK AND THE WORLD (McKay) and is remembered by readers of CROSS CURRENTS for "How Can I Know What God Wants of Me?" (Winter 1955), and "Europe and the Americans" (Winter 1953). He and Eugon Kogon are co-editors of FRANKFURTER HEFTE, the outstanding German monthly review.

* A book by Romano Guardini, "Das Ende der Neuzeit," not yet in English.

resolutions, in their secret prayers. He who knows missionaries, brothers and sisters, knows the quiet passion that burns in many of them. Often they are more involved with a personal drive towards absolute surrender than with the accomplishment of the specific mission duty. The mission is for many actually a mystical calling, for others an unselfish labor of love; it is often spiritual nobleness which summons the unknown little man to this secret sacrifice. But here at home what becomes visible of mission work has little of this quiet greatness: here the mission appears rather as a province of pious activity which has never grasped and transfigured the awareness of Christianity. We need not, in this connection, be thinking only of the mission romanticism, of the tinfoil collections of our childhood—in those good old days it cost twenty-one marks "to set a heathen child free." Nor do we need to be thinking of the world of mission publications which, in spite of the exoticism of their circumstances (or perhaps because of this exoticism), often conduct themselves in a way noticeably narrow and brash and provincial, as though they were in no measure written for adult modern contemporaries. (Within the houses of a few missionary orders the situation is quite different: earnest, weighty, and serious—but rarely are this earnestness and the difficult domestic problems of these houses brought out before the Christian community.)

Despite the powerful inclinations of those many who know the true meaning of their task, the existence of the mission as a whole has always been quite definitely a special province, one which remains distinct from daily Christian life. If it has attracted remarkable brains and hearts it has absorbed them too: they have then disappeared from the life of the Christian nations. In our time there has been no

poetry, no epic, no lyric, no dramatic poem of the missions—missions have not moved the heart of any European poet. Perhaps this is beginning to change, but as yet it has only been the Christian problem of the Conquest that has seized the interest of the poets (Claudel, Reinhold Schneider, and others)—a bygone period with great inner drama; moreover this new interest has resulted more from the experience of a dictatorship than from missionary interest. There have been merely approaches to a theology of the mission; just within recent decades has there been a slow stirring of such a theology (of the story of prophecy and salvation). One need only compare the total isolation of the missions from the spiritual life here at home with the wealth of vital expressions resulting from the French colonial policy in North Africa: the civilizing-political exploitation and symbiosis in this area—on the evidence of poets and other writers, painters, and even composers—have far more strongly stimulated the consciousness of France than the missions have stimulated the consciousness of white Christendom. In spite of all mission Sundays, papal exhortations, propaganda actions of the mission orders, and despite the insights which the greatness of the theme has produced, the mission remains an isolated and specialized task on the margin of Christian life.

Perhaps the situation is the same in the evangelical realm. The great figure of Albert Schweitzer is only an apparent exception. He has managed to carve out his medical mission as the deepest form of a humanitarian and to that extent quite truly religious mission of Christ. There have been few German figures for whom the errand of Christ was something more than a pious special task of conducting the Church and its devout.

Perhaps it is different in England. Perhaps there a more important place in the national consciousness has been achieved by the tight and, for many, seemingly "guiltless" connection of the Christian and the civilizing missionary zeal of the missions. This must make their problem even more acute at the present moment than previously. In America the missions must be, as here with us, though in a different way, the concern of a specialized and massively organized pious activity.

These statements ought to arouse the believing Christian. His belief stands and falls with the performance of mission duty. This performance can be a matter of indifference only to him who sees in Christ salvation for himself alone. But such a person is no Christian; to the extent that the individual Christian takes the serious responsibility upon himself of attaining his own salvation in fear and trembling and devout hope, to that same extent must he not shirk, in his labor after salvation, from attending to the salvation of others and consequently to the growth of the church in general. The church, in which alone salvation is to be gained, is the church of mankind. In our indifference to the salvation of non-Christians flourishes a deep weakness of belief. Upon a belief in salvation through Christ we have built a religion in which we have established ourselves, and this religion is so very much a religion among others, that it, the true religion in relation to others either less true or completely false, no longer arouses the strength of the mission as the prophecy of salvation. The mission has become the comparator of religions, and that is a problematic business, a specialty for the amateur fancier of religions unless in some individual instance reality prevails: in that case for

one who is ensnared and lost, releasing and redeeming salvation is offered, the faith and love of Jesus Christ, conversion into a new man. Amateurs of the Christian religion are scarcely the best missionaries; all too often in the way of the truth stands their lovingly constructed essence of religion. The reality of the church is far more than a religion; it is the involvement and the history of mankind with Christ. The best missionary will be the one who has most passionately at heart his relation to his fellow men and to Christ.

This opens up a world of questions which cannot be clarified in a brief article. The message of salvation is not to be divided by men while they try to distinguish between their "religion" in the narrower sense, and their character and their "culture." God in his unknown workings is not snared therein; on earth however the devout receiver of this message is a very limited and dependent creature who believes in *his* way and not in an abstract or absolute way, on the basis of this belief lives or does not live, but is likewise defined and conditioned by the social context in which he conceives and lives his belief. This may often seem to be a troublesome limitation of the purity of belief, but it is to be seen as a basic fact rather than a negative comment: it is the social and historical reality of men for whom Christ died, men who have been in action since His time and because of Him, in action in the direction of approaching salvation. The truth was brought by the Jews to the Romans, by the Romans to the Germans; traces of this path can still be followed—not only in ruins, works of art, and books, but also in our own heads and hearts, in our minds and predilections. It would be an illusion to wish to deny this movement of things, to purify "pure belief" from the "contaminations" of history. The insoluble

problem here stated we may deny, disavow, refuse to recognize—or, on the other hand, we may recognize the problem and attempt to deal practically with it in its many relations to “pure belief”: there is no way of rising above the problem.

Within the sphere of this problem is the “quarrel of rites” which arose during the sixteenth century, a struggle decided in 1742 against the Jesuits, who had proposed strong adaptations to the ritual world and the terminology of the Chinese; but all customary pastoral letters for city and country areas are already full of distinctions which pertain to this problem—and, finally, Bultman’s theology of “de-mythologising” has something to do with it, and indeed so has the entire Protestant thesis of purifying Christianity from “the works of man” as well as the Protestant return to the original sources, which is how “the Scriptures”, and in any event “the Fathers”, were understood. In the meantime we have learned a double wisdom in both churches and without prejudice to their theological differences: that this attempt to isolate Christian truth from the history of the human spirit must miscarry—and that the data of this spiritual history must always be remeasured against the Spirit of the first hour.

As it happens, most missionaries have not gone to the trouble of giving themselves headaches over the fact that they are fetching the truth about Christ from Palestinian customs to Rome, from the Roman realm to Germany, from European civilization to Uganda. For the most part they have been quite proud of it. Awareness of certain problems has come to a head only in our day, stemming as much from Christian consciousness of belief as from a differentiated cultural consciousness. Christian consciousness of belief seems to have become more percipient and pre-

cise; at no cost will it permit any confusion of belief with other things. At the same time cultural consciousness has revealed the weaknesses, limitations, and fragility of European culture and the intrinsic value, beauty and individuality of other cultures. Since this revelation the naive Christian mission has been seen to be ambiguous—in part comic, in part horrible. (The cotton frocks of mission negroes may, according to the circumstances, be comic, horrible, or appropriate and useful; the same may be said of chorales and many other things.) Let the profits and losses be reckoned, (including the hygienic results which were made possible only by the cooperation of the colonial administration and the mission), by anyone’s reckoning the results will be mostly negative: a disruption of old customs, which admittedly were often cruel but which were nevertheless often protective and were above all indigenous and dignified. The Christian negroes educated in the missions often turned out to be particularly lying, thievish, and unreliable: elements of decomposition based on disintegration, which is often more the fault of the missionaries than of the colonisers—the former pierce deeper into the soul.

Such a judgment was often false or distorted, since the circumstances were—and are—exceptionally complex. Even if one does not take into consideration the success of the true mission, which grafted itself onto the living vine of the church, very often the result of this cooperation between the colonial administrations and the missions represented a true freeing of the natives from internal and external stresses, the beginning of a new life for many individuals and also for whole groups. It was finally the beginning of that emancipation in which both these individuals and groups are at present involved. At this point we must be careful to avoid

a species of aestheticism which finds the greatest value in a stylistic purity of detached cultures. If one wants to reply to both the former distorted criticism and this latter romantic criticism of the missions, the Christian consciousness undergoes something like complete paralysis: the tremendous mandate of Christ has become problematical. It has further value, but it is no longer easy to see how it is to be carried on without harming or confusing the men for whom it has value.

It is necessary to free oneself from this anxiety. There must be an end of this definite mixture of holy and quite unholy things, but there cannot be an end to the historicity of mankind which constantly impels men into these mixtures. Even if one plays with the idea that in the future the proclamation of the tidings might be especially entrusted to Christians of other races, peoples, or cultures, nevertheless this consideration does not in any way permit us white Christians, already unsure enough in our faith, to dispense with this mission duty. This duty sends us to people who perhaps no longer need us as colonizers, or physicians, or givers of counsel but who need more than ever, and increasingly, the voice of Christ; it was pleasing to Him once to give His message and His sacrament into the hand of history—that is, into the hands of very questionable men. The fact that we have become so unsure does not relieve us of this duty.

We should not have any anxiety about the unknown debit of belief which may arise from our Europeaness and from our cultural and political behavior, if we can answer only for this cultural and political behavior. In retrospect upon the mission, we can transform ourselves neither into angels nor into total unbelievers apart from history and apart

from place; historical communication is established with the mission. The duty of mission recognizes no alien cultures. The One Church brings men together not only in a boundless confine of belief and cult but in every way possible, for it is a church of human men. In the Christian service of God by whites and negroes alike the whole "negro question" is resolved. We do not need to extinguish our entire historical existence for the sake of the credibility and purity of our message, but rather we must declare ourselves free only of definite concepts and facts which we have recognized as burdensome: they are precisely those that we have recognized as unjust and doubtful quite apart from this duty of mission. This is merely a new basis for an old recognition. Our injustice is not only in our way but blocks our obedience to Christ's mandate. We no longer need to immolate ourselves on the altar of our injustice. In other respects, our European mode of existence is as legitimate as the color of our skin: it suffices to make sure that we do not over-value either of them.

But the symbiosis of the mission with the injustice of the capitalistic and imperialistic exploitation of the world is so tight that this renunciation betokens a crisis, revolutionizing the mission and suggesting the obligation to set itself upon very new paths.

It is clear that an overnight change is not possible. There are corners of the world where the missions may be carried on for a long time in the same way. (Of course it would be good for these missions to look ahead and learn something even now from the experiences of others; even the Eskimos will not remain untouched by the spirit of emancipation.) But there where the old methods have become essentially unworkable, nothing remains but to begin anew. One cannot go away. The mis-

sion can fall into really tragic situations. At times perhaps the only solution is to continue to serve until you are thrown out.

It would be easy to give advice from a distance. But here we are concerned only with grasping a change of situation which holds true for all missions, from Greenland and from Africa all the way to China. In individual situations the circumstances of the adjustment (and the men who are involved in it) will require widely differing methods in order to prepare for the new situation. Above all the decisive difference is that the man in the specific place must keep up his work even though the forms of his work seem lost and he must find meaning in new ways.

Just what such a changed situation can imply will become clear quite easily if we look back into History. It is evident that such changes have more than once completely transformed methods of preaching the gospel.

In the first phase missionary activity was, in purest and most innocent fashion, nothing but its basic self: the message of the salvation-bearing death and the salvation-bearing resurrection of the God who had become man; this message revealed itself "in the fulness of time" within the political sphere of the Roman Empire, with the aid of her converts and under her protection as a personal message to the men who lived in the spiritual blind-alley of the ancient world. The ascendancy of that first mission was the ascendancy of the truth which frees.

Soon after the Constantinian conversion the preaching of the Gospel became entangled in the struggles over the division of kingdoms and the German tribes and budding nationalities; it remained a personal preaching, but at the same time it became a function of political

power and profited from the latter's ascendancy.

In the Middle Ages it remained narrowly within the Empire: national groups on its borders whose princes and powerful families allowed themselves to be baptized did not thereby enter just the Church, but entered "Christendom" and hence the political order of the Empire as well. They could not follow the Pope without at the same time binding themselves to the Emperor.

The Spaniards carried this political Catholicism to an extreme; in a Christian opposition to this salvation by force arose the actual mission of preaching and good deeds. The attempt of the Jesuits to organize several political and civilizing forms for the new provinces of Christianity remained an isolated experiment and later disappeared.

In this era a new symbiosis arose which is now at an end; the missionaries in Japan, China and India attempted to penetrate the old cultures by means of the European ascendancy of knowledge. And as the European spirit became scientifically and politically expansive with a new force, the missions hung on. The new type of mission station, Catholic as well as Protestant, became a coalition of religious men, teachers, doctors, and nurses under the protection of the European flag.

Now the people wish to heal and teach themselves. The peoples of the old cultures, having considered us at great length, under the pressure of white knowledge and technique and after frustrated efforts to shut themselves off from them, have decided to incorporate these forces into their own culture. But of course the partly "primitive", partly degenerate, so-called "nature-peoples" of Asia and Africa have trod the new path. So has the Mohammedan world, which separates us from

them. That is an elementary historical fact. He who wants to help people now must help them to help themselves—and even in this attempt he must respect their own self-will and jealousy.

For the missions that old, different direct help had a double function: it was, on one hand, direct service of love, *caritas*, an act indissoluble from preaching the gospel. And secondly it was a sign of the authenticity of faith.

In less pleasant instances it was a wooing, a means of propaganda or actually bait; in its proper meaning this aid was an element of trustworthiness, of community and of authenticity. The first function remains; the messengers of faith will never be relieved from the duty to love, to assist and to dry the tears of those in need anywhere they know their aid will help. But they must soberly convince themselves that the second function is constantly losing its meaning and becoming its own opposite. In many instances an American or European-run system of hospitals and schools stands directly in the path of the desire for self help. Whoever clings to them puts himself under suspicion of wanting to make the white influence indispensable; this man really stands in his own way—not just in propaganda or in the eyes of a domestic politician, but actually and truly. He really stands in the way. And he stands as much in the way of his faith; he is no longer worthy of trust, and he will no longer be believed, nor will his gospel.

The proof of the authenticity of the Christian message is given to others in this hour of world-history, and it must be delivered in a new way. In the era of One World, the place of science and technique, of medicine and of education which used to give proof of authenticity, will be succeeded by the policy of cooperation. If people who call themselves Christian conduct themselves loyally, fairly and cooperatively, if they

do not revert to the old colonialism nor encourage the new indirect forms of imperialism, the missions will find their situation more relaxed. A climate of common Christian trust will become possible, in which the personal credibility of the missionary can become real in new ways. At the very least a difficult barrier will have been side-tracked, the specific unauthenticity of the white mission-bearers. It is possible that political considerations may make impossible such a program of honest and radical denial of mastery; it may be that politically only a tedious backtracking lies ahead. That is another topic; for the missions, at any rate, nothing more is necessary than a decisively fair, brotherly policy. A "division of labor" will also occur; that which the doctors and teachers did for the missions earlier, serving as the sign of their credibility, now the lay politicians of the European and American states must do.

Missionaries are absolutely relieved of this responsibility; they must carefully withdraw from political territory. In the era of One World, (and this may be an apocalyptic sign) it is fitting that missions, insofar as they are dependent on men, no longer depend on the zeal of the missionaries alone, but on the solidarity of peoples, a political solidarity which is in itself profane, as the medical science and the economics of missionaries were profane, but just as capable as were these of being pretty well understood and realized by the power of the Christian heart. The missions then are dependent on the whole body of Christians; they depend on the extent to which Christians refuse political vice and incorporate the impulse to solidarity into constructive policy.

But just on this point the prospects for Christian missionaries do not appear too bright. The political mistakes

and vices of white policy, even though more a matter of the past than of the present, have driven them out of mission territory; it is not easy to believe that even the political virtues of these policies will permit them to return as messengers of faith.

At the same time, however, this historical hour is the great hour of the Christian mission. Once more the grouping for a beginning repeats itself; a whole world stands open and waiting. The One World waits for the truth that is not imposed by force.

It is probably idle to conjecture whether the end of Christianity is approaching, the great desertion which only the little flock will oppose, or whether in this "Hour of World Mission" Christianity is today really beginning for the first time, after the preface of that all too fixed and always questionable Christianization of the West. No matter what the true meaning is, it changes nothing which must be done in the world or at home, in our countries, families and hearts.

But if they must turn back or are forced to remain, what then can they do? If they are no longer permitted the old work, and on the other hand are given no opportunity, no possibility of making themselves useful and hence credible?

Perhaps in many countries a different sort of fruitful symbiosis will become possible: so that male and female missionaries, priests and laymen can assist in the systems of self-help, aiding in the hospitals and schools of those whose country it is, without power and perhaps with fewer rights.

Possibly the old Benedictine form of missions will again attain new significance; so that independent cloisters might be formed on the basis of agricultural groups or industrial communi-

ties, in which native and white men might live together with one another in brotherly fashion as an actual kernel of Christian life.

Perhaps much will be preserved of what is old in new ways. That which from our point of view seems a tactical adaptation to a new regime, an attempt to salvage a mission-station through submission and compromise, may in fact be much more: a genuine sacrifice through which the missionary may again become credible.

Perhaps elsewhere only retreat is possible—together with the desire to return, this time with empty, unsuspected hands.

Perhaps in many lands the missions will again rely entirely on the courage of the individual messenger of faith, who somehow maintains himself, and is at any rate on the spot.

Perhaps in many lands for a long time it will be up to the native Christians to sow the seed which they have received.

Perhaps from one of these non-white Christian groups a new missionary impulse will arise.

We know little about it, and we can know little about it.

Among the most difficult burdens of the Christian missions, which we must bear with us out of the recent epoch of colonialism into the future, is that of division among Christians. It endangers the authenticity and the force of the message of salvation. It is grotesque, if besides the great, tragic schism, all the different geographical and psychological forms of European-American Protestantism are going to be faithfully carried to India, China and Africa. In India this recognition has already led to reflection, and powerfully strengthened the desire for Christian unity. This desire certainly has its boundaries. The grave experience of

the ecumenical movement is repeating itself in the mission question: Roman Catholic belief permits no fusions. We cannot hold together as the same community-goal the missions of the Churches and a united Christian mission.

But this may not be the last word on the subject. The pagans and the catechumens are not led astray as to Catholic unity by the differences between the White Fathers, the Franciscans, and the Benedictines, even though all these orders are sent as examples to them. One cannot hide the scandal of the division of churches from the non-Christians and the young Christians of the mission territory, but one can lessen the disgrace if one lives and makes visible with all one's power the common possession of faith in Jesus Christ. Here again for the sake of the authenticity of faith, the reasons are doubled for doing what should be done anyway.

Naturally the problem of adjustment has been newly posed for all peoples and cultures. It will never be solved by reflection, methods and Roman directives. The actual assimilation of Christian truth into a culture which up to that time knew nothing about it must be accomplished by history itself. Those who have been baptized will find the new ways themselves and must experiment with them—Rome has known this for a long time, and has on this account demanded a native clergy and a native episcopacy. Because of this foresight we have won a great advantage; in the era of One World we are no longer to fear the mixture of cultures; it has become our fate. After the periods of increasing care for the purity of cultures, which the naiveté of the old, culture-destroying missions had unloosened, we can permit ourselves with a new freedom from bias to enter into close contact with other cultures, in the

course of which they may receive not only that essential faith in Christ which the missionaries bring but many other things as well. Similarly we ought to guard ourselves against laying unnecessary burdens alongside our faith, and very often making a burden for them out of what is for us a desire. At any rate the concern for purity of culture is no longer absolute, but only relative: the One-World civilization cannot be turned back. This question ought to be solved first. Attempts at solution are already visible in the careful concern for what is beginning and what is developing, and even more in the good common work towards the forming of common orders to help. There will be much mixing, and the aesthetes will have to bemoan the loss of many small poetic worlds. Strange things will press upon us too, and must be overcome.

A new "Fullness of Times", this One World civilization provides a breathtaking perspective. It will rob many of courage and give hope to many others.

Others, to be sure, are courageous in a different sense. Two citations from the Catholic *Deutschen Tagespost* which appeared in an article on September 29, 1954 follow:

That Christ found himself a white man on earth in a numerically catastrophic minority is evident, but through his divine foreknowledge He had previously regularized this disproportion by means of the fearful atom bomb, so that Communists and Colored peoples in blocs of armed millions might be prevented from overrunning the boundaries of the lives of white men.

Already a clearly visible girdle of western airports outflanks the compact red land masses; to them come now the pilots with their elastic method of attack. One may say without exaggeration, that around the Russian-Chinese Body a chain of pearls made up of bombs which will

burn cities is already laid; it will cause the downfall of the world-revolutionary travel-plan of Lenin-Stalin and Mao, because the white intelligence will always be victorious over the force of masses of men.

This dangerous madness, which accurately labels itself a "geo-political Observation" would not concern us here if the "Communists and Colored people" were placed only in opposition to the "white intelligence" and the

"white man", and not also to "Christ the white man" who had the foresight to place these "bombs to burn cities" in our hands. This is certainly an assassin-like attack on the missionary of Jesus Christ. But it is well to know it exists; it shows the other side, the other possibility.

Christians will have to choose.

Translated by BERNARD STAMBLER
and SALLY CUNNEEN

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THE MEANING AND VALUE OF ATHEISM TODAY

JEAN LACROIX

It is difficult and perhaps impossible to speak about atheism without hypocrisy. "When we talk about God, it is not God we speak of," Gabriel Marcel has written. In the same way, when we talk about atheism, we are not always speaking of a rejection of God. To condemn it right away, or refute it, is to present yourself implicitly as a believer; to suggest to your readers or hearers that disbelief is entirely foreign to you, is pure pharasaism. Consciousness never perfectly corresponds to being, and this inadequacy will be greatest in its most profound realizations.

Here we meet the classic distinction between *theoretical atheism*, which may be accompanied by a real belief in God, and *practical atheism*, which does not prevent a verbal affirmation of God. Nevertheless, these very formulas have their own perils. A facile apologetics wins a cheap victory by declaring that there are no absolute negations and that every atheist is really a believer who just doesn't know it. This formula is both false and dangerous. First, because it tends to ignore the seriousness of another man's affirmation, and to annex to Christianity in spite of himself someone who refuses it: this apparently charitable apologetic actually is quite annoying and even wounding. Secondly, because at least on the level of

the will, a radical and absolute atheism is possible, and there doubtless are some men who really deny God, and even deny him eternally. For them the negation of God is like the obverse of a positive affirmation of values which we must try to understand, if not always endorse. We do not easily shake off atheism by immediately refusing to see any meaning in it; it has a meaning and a value which has varied in the course of time. We are concerned with discovering the precise significance of atheism in the modern world.

This problem is supremely ambiguous: there is a good and bad kind of belief, as there is a good and a bad disbelief. The consequence of this is that there is no authentic and valuable belief which is not accompanied in fact—and rightly—by a partial disbelief. We must distinguish intellectually, and perhaps in every attitude and every action as well, between *representation* and *aspiration*. For a relative and finite mind, the representation of the absolute can only be relative, the representation of the infinite can only be finite. "It is of the nature of the infinite that it cannot be understood by us, since we are finite beings," Descartes wrote, and from it drew this humble conclusion: "I have never spoken of the infinite except to submit to it." Every image of God, therefore, is worked out by means of inadequate representations. Thus in any belief there is a partial anthropomorphism and idolatry which cannot be eliminated. "If God has created man in his image, man has certainly returned the favor," Voltaire said. We need not be surprised or scanda-

Jean Lacroix is a French philosopher, author of *MARXISME, EXISTENTIALISME, PERSONALISME* (Presses Universitaires). *CROSS CURRENTS* has already translated "Religious conscience and political conscience" (Fall 1952), and "The Notion of Work" (Spring-Summer 1954). The present article appeared in *ESPRIT*, Feb. 1954.

lized: man cannot know anything without representing it to himself and his representation necessarily takes on a human form. But we must not confuse the representation of an object with the object itself; the representation is for man a means of attaining it, or at least of aspiring to it. What is essential is not the representation, but what the spirit is aiming at by means of it. Of course, by purifying the representation, we sharpen the aim. Thus one of the principal functions of atheism in the individual and in humanity is progressively to cleanse our conception of God of anthropomorphic elements, and by denying one image of God, make it possible for a purer representation to be elaborated.

But the ambiguity is still more radical. The most accurate aiming at God does not always take place by means of the least inexact representations. This holy woman may reach God with a superstitious gesture, while that philosopher fails to reach him with his learned representation. There are books of apologetics which hide (or rather, reveal) a ridiculous disbelief; there are pitiful and false images, even silences and negations, through which an authentic faith passes.

In this area where intelligence cannot be dissociated from the whole being judgments cannot adequately translate the requirements of reason; where reason ought to place itself at the service of the spirit, we cannot judge of the living faith by following intellectual criteria alone. Not that the effort of intelligence is unimportant here, for it is both cause and effect, but it is right that it be properly delimited. In a matter where theory and practice cannot be dissociated, where the man who does not live as he thinks always ends by thinking as he lives, we must *also* disengage the testimony of intelligence, without forgetting that it is the totality

of our life which ultimately bears witness for or against us.

Hence we are not putting atheism on trial here, but trying to understand and explain it. The purpose of this study is to locate some landmarks: to try to clarify the meaning of contemporary atheism. Thus, many forms of causes (the problem of evil, etc.) will be left aside; we will retain only those aspects of traditional atheism which throw light on today's atheism by resemblance or contrast.

Intellectual and Aristocratic Atheism

“**A**theism, a sign of mental strength, but only up to a certain point,” Pascal said. This mental strength, if we try to take it into consideration in terms of the development of humanity and reflect on it, appears essentially as an effort at the liberation of man. This liberation had originally a specifically intellectual meaning and now assumes a more political significance.

Intellectual atheism—under what we may call its methodological aspect—has been the most vigorous and efficacious means of criticizing anthropomorphism. Historically, such criticism has perhaps given us the feeling of a truth that is independent of us, which is not the work of our hands or made in our image. In antiquity this is already the criticism made by Xenophanes: Men give themselves gods in their image, but “the Ethiopians say that theirs are flat-nosed and black, and Thracians say that they have blue eyes and black hair.” “If cattle and horses had hands and knew how to paint, the cattle would paint figures of gods that were like cattle, the horses and lions would make their gods resemble them.” Such an atheism, which we may call an atheism of representation, is indeed only methodological, since the same Xenophanes,

looking at the heavens, knows how to read in them the unity of God. Likewise Epicurus says: "The impious man is not the one who destroys the belief in the gods of the mob, but the man who attributes to the gods the characteristics which the opinions of the mob lend them." Such criticism is not truly atheism, but is easily mistaken for it. Actually, it can only deny a particular representation of God in the name of a more elevated representation. But often it does not analyze its implications and presents itself as atheism, confusing a particular image of God with every possible representation of him. Its proper function, as regards the problem of God, is the same as that of negative judgment in all human knowledge. This kind of negation has been the condition of progress in humanity for the idea of God. As Victor Hugo wrote:

Ces douteurs ont frayé la route
Et sont si grands sous le ciel bleu
Que désormais, grace a leur doute
On peut enfin affirmer Dieu.

But the philosopher is more obstinate than the poet. The affirmation of God is never able to become adequate in man to its object; therefore, atheism and disbelief—good disbelief—always remain necessary and immanent for him. In this sense there is a sort of profound impiety and atheism proper to philosophy.

Outside of revelation we commonly distinguish three sources of the idea of God: the sociological, the rational, and the mystical. There is the God of the group and of tradition, the God of reason which is the ultimate response to problems concerning the world and man, and finally the God of interior dialogue, prayer and mystical experience. The philosophic mind exercises its criticism in all three areas, especially against the social God, which is often the most gross; but it denounces also the sophisms which use God to give a final explanation, and by applying in-

tellectual criteria make even the discerning of mystical experience very difficult. Every religion can degenerate into superstition, every representation of God which is not purified by atheist criticism becomes idolatrous. Against a Joseph de Maistre who affirmed that we must "defend superstition as an advance-post of religion", Pascal had written two centuries previously that "to defend religion to the point of superstition is to destroy it." That is why every philosophy which is not contested and which is not on trial has very little value because it does not fill its role. This is a constantly renewed value of atheism which it is well to remember, even if it is not of the highest level of importance. This kind of criticism, however, has been too exclusively intellectual, and for centuries has been the work of only a small number of men. Instead of purifying the gods of the crowd, it has often stood aside, satisfied with its own value, without seeking any influence. The common people were believers and the intellectuals "free-thinkers". In spite of its ability, it had in it an internal fault, related to its scorn of the vulgar. We thus understand how Robespierre, who recognized this fault—and nothing else—rejected this body of criticism with the summary formula: "Atheism is aristocratic".

Nevertheless, there is at least one form under which this atheism is of great importance and significance in modern civilization—its scientific form. We might be able to express this idea schematically by saying that if philosophy allows the *God of reflection* to continue to exist, science has certainly destroyed the *God of explanation*. And the general movement of philosophy has confirmed and deepened this destruction by science. If we sometimes still meet the easy apologetics which attempts to utilize the science of the day in order to prove the existence of

God or even establish the value of the faith, this is more apt to be among scientists than among philosophers. Meditation on the scientific spirit and its very requirements should be enough to make every believer avoid demonstrating the existence of God by a calculation of probabilities in the manner of Lecomte de Nouy, or by medical and really scientific uses of the religious attitude, particularly that of prayer, in terms of the cure of the sick, along the lines of Alexis Carrel.¹

We must go further and recognize that atheism today has become that form of the spirit which always refuses God as a principle of explanation. The Epicureans were right in imposing two conditions on every scientific hypothesis: to account for the phenomena, and not to force Gods to intervene. Here again this type of methodological atheism has generally won the battle, and almost everyone is in at least general agreement today in admitting that we should not introduce God as a scientific explanation of events that belong to the history of the world, or even as the principle of explanation of the world itself. Renouvier said: "Atheism is the true scientific method". In Kantian terms, we have no right to make a transcendental use of the principle of causality; because there is causality in the world, it does not follow that there is a causality of the world.² Thus there may be a sort of reflective demonstration of the existence of God, but not by properly scientific proofs. This does not necessarily mean that one cannot go to God by starting out from a reflection on the insufficiency of being in this world, which might be called a "systematic deception"—at least we should recognize that in modern philosophy the question remains open—but in no case would one be able to arrive at God by starting out from a scientific knowledge of the universe. For the scientist as such, in the

exercise of his activity, what is real by definition is that which we can take into possession, and an affirmation is true only when he can establish it according to his own methods. Reality is not proven, but verified. Science aims at laws which express relations between phenomena, not intrinsic properties of objects. Ultimately this knowledge results in the power of action over the objects of our common experience, and it is this which confirms it. Schematically, we may say the goal of science is to explain objects by one another, to account for the objects that are in the world without raising any question with regard to the world as a whole. Science assumes the world as given to her, and limits herself to it, by principle. Her immanentism, if we may so speak of it, is radical.

This new form of methodological atheism has historically played—and continues to play—an immense role of liberation and purification. It safeguards the very possibility of an authentic knowledge of God: *whatever science finds, it is that which we refuse to call God*. Science thus forces Christians to a sort of continual spiritualization of what are rather awkwardly called the proofs of the existence of God—those habitual proofs which Pascal called too complicated, and of which Kierkegaard said that they implied a kind of disbelief. To prove God scientifically would be to make of him the first link of the chain of explanation, to put him on the same level as the whole of the explanation, to make him no longer a subject, but an object. That is why Lagneau, who has given the most profound reflective reasons to affirm God, has spent his life calling himself an atheist, wanting to signify by this that if to exist is to be taken within the context of a possible experience, to be an object among others, God is not existence but value, that He is in some way be-

yond even being and knowledge, the source of all being and knowledge. We see in this way how the denial of God has sometimes utilized the representation itself in order to contradict it and go beyond it, striving to prepare a beyond of ineffable contact—this was not the case with Lagneau, who failed to arrive at that point because of not wishing to imagine love in God. Gabriel Marcel says that the principal cause of atheism is surely the use of the category of causality in connection with the problem of God. Christians more than others should understand that there is a kind of dialectic of deism and atheism which imply one another—at least if one means by deism the God of Voltaire, the affirmation of a great Architect and Maker of the world. In a general way, moreover, from Lucretius to Marx, atheism appears as the void left by an insufficient representation of God, as the other face of a purely natural, i.e. pagan, affirmation of God. It is in this sense that the atheism of believers is an essential source of the atheism of non-believers. Proudhon has said it in an unforgettable formula: *Man becomes an atheist when he feels that he is better than his God.* This is also the valid significance of the affirmation of Brunschvig: *The God of religion would not know how to be the God of the wars of religion.*³

From what we have said it is not necessary to conclude that all the blame and responsibility falls upon Christians, and that a well-understood science presents no dangers, simply permitting us to purify our conception of God. It is not true—or, at any rate, it is no longer true for the modern scientific spirit—that science and faith move in two absolutely distinct domains. We must be courageous and recognize that if science cannot be atheistic, there is in it a certain tendency to develop an atheistic manner of thought and life.

It would be to underestimate this to see in it nothing more than a simple will for power. But by its stricter and stricter alliance with technique, not simply in fact but in right, it can develop more each day a sort of spiritual state both of the explanation and of the conquest of the world, which may be called, in a sense, very humanist but which does not easily merge with other current forms of humanism which have come from other sources. The conditions of application or of practice are from now on incorporated into the essence of theory. A concept is scientific to the degree that it is technical, i.e. to the degree that it is accompanied by a technique of realization. Modern science is destructive of the contemplative mentality, and replaces it with an attitude of conquering explanation.

In addition, by penetrating into what Bacon called the secret plans of nature, by understanding them from within at the same time that it utilizes them for its own profit, by making itself so supple as to question its own principles in order to better espouse an infinitely mobile and complex reality, the human mind does not prove that God does not exist, but ceases to feel the need of him. The scientist does not *contemplate* the intelligibility of God; he *constructs* that of a world. Precisely in virtue of its rigorous honesty, this method of knowledge risks depreciating the other modes of knowing, especially philosophical reflection and religious faith, which easily seem to it to be vague, subjective and almost dishonest. If we recognize that the scientific spirit is no longer isolated, but widely diffused and popularized everywhere as the very foundation of our civilization, we will understand how important it is for the problem of God. Today it is science more than philosophy, and perhaps more than religion, which has the privilege of requiring the whole of hu-

manity to present collectively to itself the question of its being and destiny. "Ultimately, these are seeds of a new prophetism that science is sowing today in the human intelligence," says Father Dubarle.⁴ This new prophetism could easily replace the others. Contrary to what many think, then, the conflict between science and faith is not resolved; today it is dormant, doubtless waiting to rise again under a more difficult and more profound form. In this way the essential ambiguity of atheism is again evident: science is both that which obliges us to purify our conception of God, and also that which tempts us to bypass the problem.

However intellectualist, this critical atheism is bound to produce political consequences. Belief in God—more often in gods—has for a long time been considered as the essential of the social tie. To deny God would be to withdraw more or less from the constraint of society, to secede. Thus there is in this resistance of the atheist to received belief the mark of a will to the affirmation of self, a protest, an independence of judgment, which can be compared to the Cartesian criticism of prejudice. On the other hand, the affirmation of God has been a convenient and efficient means of requiring the obedience and submission of subjects. It is not only among Christians, but everywhere, that power comes from God. Or rather, from the historical point of view alone, it would be fair to make a radical distinction between the gods of horizontal and closed religions, who are the worst agents of oppression, and the Christian God who liberates man from the idols by raising him above a purely natural and social conception of the sacred, and who insures his dignity as a person. But it is also a fact that the Christian God has been invoked and used as if he were a pagan god. It was then inevitable that those who wished to liberate them-

selves from the established power were led to liberate themselves from God.

Such, for example, is the meaning of anarchy in Proudhon. For him it is impossible to destroy power and revolutionize society without attacking its foundation, which is God: atheism becomes anti-theism. *Whoever talks to me about God wants my money or my life!* he exclaimed. This means that the affirmation of the liberty of man implies the negation of the existence of God. To say that atheism becomes anti-theism is to show that it passes from the intellectual to the existential level. In order to affirm his own existence, to give his life meaning and value, man believed himself forced to deny God. Aristocratic atheism here becomes democratic; from an intellectual attitude, it becomes, in the strongest sense of the term, political. Proudhon, writing his *Contradictions économiques*, felt obliged to insert a central chapter on God—a symbolic moment in the development of humanity! The problem of God has been democratized also in the sense that it no longer arises from the science of ideas, aristocratic metaphysics, but from the science of human needs, democratic political economy. From now on, man will decide on his final choices, including the religious in relation to his material and social life.

Aristocratic atheism was slowly able to produce political consequences. In its principle it aimed only at a liberation of intelligence, valid above all for an elite. But its direction changed during the 19th century. We used Proudhon to make the universality of this transformation more evident, but it is obviously due especially to Marxism that after being aristocratic and intellectual it has become democratic and social. In addition, we cannot understand the modern mentality without analyzing the relations of these two forms of atheism. From one to the other there

is both continuity and discontinuity. First continuity, even to the point of filiation, since Marxists consider that the intellectual criticism of the idea of God and of the Christian religion, such as it has emerged from the whole materialist movement, is valid and even constitutes a definitive acquisition, however insufficient, for the human mind. Nietzsche himself never wished to kill God or to announce his death; he only claimed to have observed it and reproached men for not having the courage to accept it. We too readily forget that supermen are also, and first of all, men who dare to see reality as it is and take responsibility for it. But there is also discontinuity in the Marxist development of atheism. The criticism proceeds in a different direction, since it is in the analysis of social forms and of economic alienation that Marxists believe that they have discovered the hidden sources of the theist error and religious illusion. In a more general way, this intellectual atheism today appears to many as a primary and valuable effort at the liberation of man, but an abstract effort, which is not yet incarnated within human relations. If man does not need to go through a Mediator to recognize man, then it is especially the concrete relationships of man to man which must be transformed everywhere, and society must undergo a revolution. In its most radical sense, the problem of atheism from now on has become that of humanism. Contemporary atheism appears as an immense effort of man to liberate man, an extraordinary attempt at the total recovery of man by man.

Democratic and Political Atheism

Jacques Maritain was able to write that for a century human history has seen the volcanic irruption of an atheism that is both *absolute*, since it

really denies God himself, and *positive*, since it is a true anti-theism, which asks of man that it be profoundly lived, and is working to change the face of the earth. This atheism presents itself as a truly total—or rather, radical—humanism, as a tremendous recovery by man of his total humanity. God is felt as an obstacle to progress, and humanity seeks to remove this obstacle from its path. Although this is only an approximation not always verified, it is significant to note that atheism is often tied today to human hopes, while belief in God is readily accompanied by a criticism of the idea of progress. Too often theologies of history are presented only as a negation of a philosophy of history. Thus we see the two currents that we have described previously rejoin and reinforce each other: a current of intellectual liberation, which is that of human thought in its demand for an absolute autonomy and tending to become, thanks especially to science and technique, totally master of its destiny; and a current of political and social liberation, which has always existed among the oppressed, but only arrives at maturity and becomes fully conscious of itself in a naturally atheistic proletariat which believes it discovers in the denial of God the necessary condition of human advancement. It is a capital fact of our world that spiritualist beliefs are felt by millions of men as an impediment to their humanity, that a Christian worker who encounters Marxism has a troubled conscience, and asks himself if his religion does not tend towards a betrayal of his class. This is the cause of this phenomenon of compensation, this laborite demagoguery that we sometimes meet among Catholics, through which they unconsciously hope to have their Christianity forgiven them, forgiven not by others but by themselves. The problem of atheism appears as the most up-to-the-min-

ute expression of the eternal problem of freedom. It is significant that among many of our contemporaries this term is being replaced by that of liberation, ultimately a revolt against alienation. To say that man is free is to affirm at the same time that he holds his human being of himself, not by virtue of another, whomever that might be. In spite of otherwise essential differences, here is a common theme in both Marxism and atheist existentialism: one must choose between the freedom of man and the existence of God.

Atheism is not a super-structure of Marxism, it is profoundly essential to it. We find two reasons for this, of unequal profundity, when we study Marx's work. The first—the best known—remains still a little exterior and sociological. For Marx religion is "the opium of the people", a formula that we forget to cite in its context: *Religious poverty is, on one hand, the expression of a real poverty and, on the other hand, a protest against real poverty. Religion is the sigh of the creature that has been crushed, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of an age without spirit. It is the opium of the people.* It is because this world does not suffice to assure man his full subsistence, his total accomplishment, his integral development that he in some way compensates by imagining another world. Religious alienation has its source in economic alienation; suppress the latter, and you will destroy the former. Religion, according to Engels' formula, is the act by which man empties himself and transfers the essence of his humanity to the phantom of a god in the beyond. Atheism thus takes on a positive meaning: it is the direct and concrete affirmation of humanity by man. By the negation of God man has been given back to himself, he conquers his objective being. *Religion, writes Marx, is only the illusory sun which moves*

around man, in as much as it does not move by itself.

Such an atheism would remain rather formal, if the content of humanism was not clarified. The second reason for Marxism's atheism does this by identifying atheism and freedom, or rather liberation. In fact, atheism is definitely grounded in Marx on his conception of work. It is because man is the demiurge of man, that is to say, because man makes himself human in his battle against nature that he could not be made by another, by a god. The atheism of Marx is the necessary obverse side of his positive definition of man as essentially a worker who conquers his humanity by transforming his world by his work.

Ultimately, freedom is aseity: to be free is to owe one's being only to oneself. Consequently, either man has been created by another man on whom he depends, and is not free; or he owes his humanity only to himself, that is to say, he is free, but then God does not exist. The problem of atheism appears then as that of the ultimate meaning of freedom, of that freedom which Marx called *the eternal aristocracy of human nature*. Moreover, he himself had a sharp awareness of this and affirmed it in a precise way: "No one is independent in his own eyes unless he is sufficient to himself and this condition is reached if he owes his existence only to himself. A man who lives thanks to another man considers himself as a dependent being. But I live completely through the favor of another not only when I owe him the preservation of my life, but when he has, in addition, created my life, when he is its source. My life has necessarily such a source outside of me if it is not my own creation. That is why it is so difficult to rid the popular consciousness of the notion of creation. For socialist man, on the other hand, since the whole of hu-

man history is nothing but the procreation of man by human labor, the becoming of man's nature, he possesses the visible and irrefutable proof of his self-production, the process of his creation."

From his first work the young Marx had violently taken up the Promethean challenge: "Philosophy cannot keep it secret. It makes its own the profession of faith of Prometheus: briefly, I hate all the gods! And philosophy opposes this motto to all the gods of heaven and earth, who do not recognize the human conscience as the supreme divinity!" This is Marx's thought at the time when he was still a *philosophical liberal*. But his whole mature work, on this point, terminates in a double and complementary demonstration: the more man is religious, the less he is man; the more man will be man, the less will he be religious. What particularly interests us here, since it gives modern atheism its special mark, is the link between the religious problem and economics and politics. God is not contested in himself, but his foundation in human existence is laid bare and overthrown. Again following Marx: *the criticism of heaven is thus transformed into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion becomes the criticism of law, the criticism of theology becomes the criticism of politics*. This explains why the classical proofs of the existence of God, however valuable they may be, at least in their profound intuition and ultimate convergence, have no relevance for so many of our contemporaries. Perhaps the greatest originality of Marx is to have maintained that the human truth is neither natural nor metaphysical, but in the strongest sense of the term, political, that is to say mediatized by society and history. Certainly Marxism denied the metaphysical heaven of ideas, but whatever several of its critics think, it is not a theory

of reflex truth. For it truth is dialectical, that is historical, for politics as it understands it is the highest dimension of man. At the same time that humanity suppresses private property, which separates the bourgeois from the proletarian, it suppresses God, which separates man from man. "Atheism," Marx wrote, "is humanism mediatized by the suppression of religion, and communism is humanism mediatized by the suppression of private property." In such a perspective, atheism is no longer presented as the consequence of an intellectual reasoning, but rather as the preliminary condition of freedom, and if it is possible to use the phrase, the humanity of man.⁵

In quite a different context, since it is no longer a question so much of the destiny of mankind as of the destiny of each individual, atheistic existentialism has, on the point which is of special interest to us here, a kindred meaning. The different emphasis comes from the fact that for it the past becomes less that upon which we rest than that from which one is freed, and the ambiguity of history does not allow us to see any general meaning in it but only to give to each instant whatever results from my engagement in the problems of the present. This existentialism also presents itself as a humanism which takes as its own the motto of Lequier: *To do, and in the doing to make oneself*. Freedom is at the heart of Sartre's thought: it is its very definition. But that we are free does not dispense us from *making* ourselves freed. Out of this freedom to which we are condemned we must make our freedom. Man is not, he ought to create himself; free, it is necessary for him to liberate himself; human, he must humanize himself. But this postulate of freedom, if properly understood, requires the rejection of God: between the existence of God and the affirmation of his liberty, each man must choose.

Ultimately, if God exists, he can only limit the freedom of man. To admit the existence of God is to present man as a creature. But if God creates man, he must create him in accordance with the idea he has of man. We must then say that man has a nature, an "essence", and that this essence precedes and determines his existence. Predestination would ultimately be the only logical attitude for a man who admits God. To accept liberty, on the other hand, is to recognize that existence precedes essence; in its foundations existentialism is simply the affirmation of absolute human freedom, and for this reason it is atheist. Man for Sartre is the Cartesian God, creator even of the values which are called eternal. In this sense all the modern philosophies of value proceed more or less from Kant. In making a distinction between being and perfection, by declaring that good will is the only thing that is absolutely good, there resulted an understanding of the value of willing: to be of value, something must be presented as for the sake of a freedom. In an even more essential manner, Kantian freedom is that which delivers me from my past, that which permits my "conversion" with reference to eternity.

Although Sartre's freedom does not refer to the eternal but to nothingness, it is also understood as a deliverance, a liberation from the past. For Sartre, freedom must be creative, productive, constitutive, or it is not freedom. In fact, this affirmation, "If man is free, God does not exist" would be identical in Sartre's thought with "If man is free, he is mortal." A being which would never escape from the Supreme Being, could never escape its destiny; it would be determined once and for all by the place that it occupies in the Cosmos. If man were immortal, he could never withdraw from the omnipotence of God. For Sartre freedom is fundamen-

tally tied to mortality, which certainly seems Hegelian. "By the possibility of death," Hegel writes, "the subject shows that he is free and absolutely raised above all restraint." To take up another formula of Hegel, dying is linked up "with the appearance of pure freedom". For Sartre as for Hegel, death and freedom are two aspects of negativity; it is because man is a being through whom nothingness enters the world that he is free and is mortal. Sartre denies immortality as he denies God, because he affirms liberty, and in a sense we may even say that he denies God because he denies immortality. We must refuse to turn to an eternity which is nothing but the opposite of time, precisely because it will deter us from accomplishing our work in time. If God exists, man is nothing; but if man chooses to exist, it is God who becomes nothing. This is already the striking formula of *The Flies*: "man without any support and without any aid is condemned at each instant to discover man."

Because of the intemperate style and provoking tone of his plays, Sartre offends Christian apologists. Unfortunately, we know that the latter have not been backward in similar tactics. A hundred critics have already exposed the godless man of Sartre's anthropology. We must remember that by defining man as a will to synthesize the *en-soi* and the *pour-soi*, as the idea of being God, Sartre has professed a sort of upside-down theology which the experts have quickly learned to put back on its feet. To return to Proudhon's phrase, Sartre's atheism is an anti-theism; it is tempting to demonstrate that it contains within itself a theology with which it is in conflict.

The atheism of Merleau-Ponty—he would hardly accept the word—is much closer to what traditional philosophy would call agnosticism. It is neither a

prophetism nor even, strictly speaking, a humanism. If it denies God, it is not in order to affirm man but in order to try to understand him. The absolute of God as well as the absolute of history appear to him as equally destructive of the problem—and the problem is me, the others, and the world. Man is relative; to be utilized in some way as only existing for an absolute—whatever that might be—on whom he would depend, would be to misunderstand him. Every attitude which states the contingency of the human being only for the purpose of deriving it from a Necessary Being, i.e. to rid itself of contingency, is in his eyes theological, and destructive of philosophy. In order to save philosophy, it must be kept on the level of the problematic, and place its hope not in any destiny but in that element in man which is not destiny. Faithful to the intuitions of the young Marx against his later distortions, Merleau-Ponty defines the philosophical attitude as *praxis*, that is, as "that meaning which is developed spontaneously in the intersection of actions by which man organizes his relations with nature and with others."⁶ As Merleau-Ponty interprets it, *praxis* is neither the dialectic of the idea nor a dialectic of matter, but a dialectic of man—the complete man in situation in the world. For him, as for Abbagnano, the Italian defender of positive existentialism, the fundamental concept of philosophy is that of "the absolutely problematic." For whoever remains with the problematic, i.e. philosophy, man is a *freedom in situation*. Theism cannot understand this, whether it divinizes freedom (and ends in fanaticism), or the situation—which leads to resignation since events are accepted as signs of God, or the gods, and produce Savonarolas.

The same criticism can be presented differently. For Merleau-Ponty, religion, like other forms of culture, is only

a certain modality of inter-human relations. The meaning of this modality is *the fantastic effort of man to rejoin other men in another world*. But there can be a more immediate and direct contact with man's humanity. Christianity knows this quite well, admitting in God both the paternity of the Father, which can only produce a theology, and the brotherhood of the Son, which can only produce an anthropology. Thus there is a sort of duality, even duplicity, in the Christian who wants—unconsciously—to play on two stages.

This sharp criticism attempts to penetrate the center of the Christian perspective in order to decompose it from within. Nevertheless, it does not appear to have attained its object. It is a fact that the Christian does not recognize his God in the one that Merleau-Ponty describes, which ultimately is nothing but a *deus ex machina*. More technically, Merleau-Ponty reveals, behind the various ways of proving or affirming God's existence, a sort of transition to the idea of an ultimate limit: God is the infinite, the perfect, the absolute, etc., that is, we deny the limitations of human qualities in order to admit them in God in a pre-eminent degree. Against this God conceived as a limit-concept, the criticism of Merleau-Ponty is largely valid—although this conception could regain a different meaning within the ensemble of a whole philosophy. What is interesting for us here is to recognize again that the problem of God is again only an aspect of the problem of man. Perhaps we would be able to reveal in this extreme humanization of problems a negative tendency in philosophy, or we might say that phenomenology is surely not the whole of philosophy.

Nevertheless, the question that has been raised is not without significance. The Christian God is especially mediator between man and man. To prove

God's existence is to prove the necessity of this mediation in thought and act. This does not mean that God can be reduced to the role of an instrument for man. If the idea of God keeps an authentic meaning philosophically, it is in terms of the value of absolute disinterestedness, a radical uprooting of egoism, in terms of the obligation for a conversion of the intelligence which would allow itself to be possessed by the truth, and of the will which would renounce its own will in order to substitute another's for it. In any case, for Merleau-Ponty the God-hypothesis is not an aid, but an obstacle to the deciphering of the immanent meaning of inter-human events. Because of this, in spite of its profoundly original characteristics, this "atheism"—so influential in our time—comes within the compass of our study, since it is most radically destructive of the heaven of ideas; for Merleau-Ponty, like Sartre and Marx, rationality passes from the concept to the center of the inter-human *praxis*.

Our purpose was not to analyze Marxism and existentialism for themselves, but to discern the influence of their atheism on the contemporary mentality. But in one sense this double influence, otherwise so diverse and even contrary, is here convergent. In both cases it is a question of giving man back to himself, of overthrowing the obstacles that he meets on his path, and of permitting him to take up his destiny, even though this destiny is understood from quite different points of view. Perhaps the idea of God has been more or less linked, in the course of time, to a contemplative approach to Humanity. But today it is a new man who is born, who forges his own destiny, who creates truth by his battle with nature as well as by his relations with other men; who no longer seeks a guarantee in divinity since he no longer wishes any other manager but himself; and who

perhaps no longer believes in the idea of God simply because he no longer believes in ideas. The precise significance of modern atheism, under its many forms, is the abandonment of the heaven of ideas for the earth of men.

Christianity and Atheism Face to Face

If this description is at least schematically correct, it follows that, as much from the theoretical as from the practical point of view, the sharpest problem of the day is for Christianity and atheism to *confront*⁷ each other honestly. By this we do not mean abstract opposition, or a choice between two contraries, but the confronting of two attitudes of thought and life, of two behaviors that can be neither compromised in some eclectic fashion nor simply opposed without being careful to recognize the positive values that atheism conceals under its negation. Many problems are here raised, which are common to both "Christian" and "secular" thought. On one hand, what is Christianity in today's civilization, and what have Christians become, that atheism should appear in fact to millions of men as a value and even as the supreme value? On the other hand, what is there in the modern world which opposes Christian values but which is also obscurely in accordance with them? However these questions are answered there is work to be done here necessary for getting one's bearings and for serious analysis; its importance should leave no one indifferent. Without encroaching on future studies, perhaps it will not be useless, by way of conclusion, to sketch out a few lines of research.

To repeat the expression we just used, it is this denial of a heaven of ideas which has drawn some men to atheism. As Jean Wahl notes in his

Traité de Metaphysique, the importance given to history and to philosophies of history tends to dissolve our notion of an absolute. For the man who considers things *sub specie aeternitatis*, God appears to be evident; when we begin to consider them *sub specie temporis*, God seems to be dissolved in a process of becoming. But perhaps the habit of linking God with the heaven of ideas is an inheritance of Greek thought rather than a requirement of faith.⁸ In any case a particularly important and difficult work waits to be accomplished by Christian philosophy: how to think out the relations between eternity and time more adequately. In his *Traité* Wahl notes several times that the Marxist conception should often be called realist rather than materialist. Under the pretense of defending God, are we not often defending an idealist conception of philosophy? Christ has not come among concepts, but among men, and the negation of the heaven of ideas does not permanently exile him.

It is true that the affirmation of man's earth aims at the exclusively human. What, asks Camus, can give birth to charity except atheism? If the individual is a reflection of God, what does it matter to him that here on earth he is deprived of men's love, since he will one day find love in its fullness? But if he is a blind creature, wandering in darkness, and the human condition is cruel and limited, he has need of equals and of their perishable love. Thus what is serious for the believer is life before God, but for the unbeliever it is a life which refuses to be mystified and to feed on illusion, a life-without-God, a life before man. For Nietzsche the absence of God gives a stimulant to existence, just as the presence of God does for Kierkegaard. At least they are in agreement in recognizing that the only authentic problem is that of existence:

do we realize the plenitude of existence before God or before man? In other terms, we might say that the confronting of Christianity and atheism is the confrontation of supernatural *hope* and earthly *hopes*. Christians ought at least to know that it will be by the way in which they reconcile both of them that they will be judged. The question posed is no longer that of their conception of God, but their conception of man. It is up to those who call themselves Christians to show that their authentic humanism implies God on the level of both thought and action.

First, on the level of thought. The value of intellectual atheism is far from being exhausted. There is—and there always will be—an element of idolatry in our conception of God. Thus we cannot exaggerate the importance of the negative dialectic which attacks the grosser aspects of our conception of God. In a more general way, we must rediscover the negative tradition of theology, and especially of philosophy, and retain from Kierkegaard at least the dialectic of certitude and incertitude in the midst of faith in God. For there is an implicit and natural faith in God in the midst of which philosophical progress takes place by a kind of dialectic of doubt and affirmation; there is also a supernatural faith in which there is a dialectic of belief and disbelief. This process goes on within; the dialectic of belief and disbelief is asserted in the very heart of faith, of which it is an internal requirement, which can become more conscious of itself through contact with outside criticisms. Maritain was not wrong in showing that in relation to all false gods, who are not only external, but also live in the mind and heart of Christians, in relation even to the naturalist or magic God that is called "the Jupiter of this world, the God of the ideologues, the men of power on their seats of honor and the

rich in their worldly glory", the saint is a total atheist, because he adores only God.

This work of spiritual purification is never finished and the weakness of Christians makes it necessary for them to make frequent use of the criticism of non-believers, which is all the stronger for taking the place of that which Christians themselves should have offered. To take but one example, what Christian would not be overwhelmed by those fiery pages of *Capital* where Marx reveals the deepest idolatry of modern times and denounces the fetichism of economic goods, symbolized and synthesized in the fetichism of gold? Do Catholic economists need to take a whole century to understand the reification process of value? For our part we consider that the spirit, as Spinoza has recognized, lives in a climate of affirmation. This means that ultimately affirmation alone has ontological value, and negation has methodological value; the act of faith is well named, since in every meaning of the term it is the very act of the spirit. Negative thought ought always to persist, necessarily present in every affirmation of God, which can escape idolatry only by a continuous effort at poverty of spirit.⁹

It is obvious that we ourselves in no way consider what are called the proofs of the existence of God outmoded, and have often said that the intelligence also ought to bear witness, but this testimony must constantly purify itself in order to take into consideration the progress of scientific, moral, and philosophical demands. What should always be guarded against in the proofs is the temptation for the believer to feel that he has become in some way the master of God, possessing him by possessing his idea. Fortunately, atheism is there to recall to us constantly that our knowledge of God is precarious and always obscure. If we understood better that

in order to find God we must obviously set out for him, we would surely speak less of knowing (*connaitre*) God than of recognizing (*reconnaitre*) him—and we would study further the intellectual and spiritual conditions of this *recognition*. Then, without abandoning any of their logical rigor, the "proofs" would change their meaning and would rediscover an authentically Christian tradition. By becoming above all the remembrance of the marks and signs—to use Rivière's term, the *tracks*—of God, it would become a true semeiology. This would not involve narrowing the quest for God, but enlarging it to the measure of every man. In fact, the knowledge of the idea of God is not all the knowledge that man may have of God. Perhaps even the idea is less a knowing about God than about man, a sort of demand in all dimensions. If there is a uniquely negative atheism, there is another form of it which remains open and makes necessary a wider and more rigorous search.

But this is only the minimum. At least for some Christians the task is to penetrate even the most enclosed atheism in order to respond to its implicit requests. To take but one example, Marx has perceived dialectic ties between man and nature, which suppose and explain the primacy of mind over the world. In this battle against the world, i.e. in work, man represents the spiritual element, not under the form of codifications which will continually be exceeded, but internal requirements which will retain a permanent aspect in their becoming. Man is a relatively autonomous activity, although conditioned by the determinations of the world in which he lives. "Men make their own history for themselves, but within an environment which conditions them." Consequently, for Marx the truth, instead of being

found in an intellectual logic, was to be discovered only in a spiritual dialectic, i.e., in a battle, ideal or real. The truth of man and nature is not something ready-made; it ought to be conquered; it must be earned, like bread, in the sweat of our brow. In the end it is through its battle with nature, through work, that man meets man, becomes human and conquers his objective being, truly becomes human. This idea is not at all the same as that of proletarian pseudo-science, which exalts itself through a class subjectivity; it means simply that the truth about man is ultimately the truth of his relations with nature and other men. This attitude is ambiguous, and in Marxism it remains tied to a denial of God which is not extrinsic, but essential to the system. But outside of its context, we are able to employ it as a valid method which will allow us to recognize that the truth of our relations with the world and with others implies the truth of our relations with God.

In every way we must understand that we are today at a turning-point for philosophy. If for the ancients Ideas are beyond the soul, for Christians the soul is above Ideas. Consequently it is true that the truth itself must be earned. This at least means that it could not be an abstraction contemplated in purity by a separated and detached intelligence, but that it is inseparable from the total situation of the human person and its condition. *We make ourselves an idol even of truth*, Pascal wrote; *truth apart from Charity is not God*. A purely abstract truth, without any relation to the concrete totality of humanity, is not literally true. The problem of the nature of truth is inseparable from that of communication, which rebounds against it and transforms it. In one sense it is correct to say that the essential philosophical problem becomes that of mutual recognition, the question

of truth is that of the reciprocity of consciences. *Verum facere se ipsum*: this formula of St. Augustine states that we are not in truth unless we realize at each moment exactly what are our relations with the other man. There is no more theology out of the communion of the Church than there is philosophy outside of the community of men. If we understand the degree of seriousness with which Marx means it, it is not absolutely false to say that the problem of God has become a political one, that human truth is political by nature, since it is mediatized by humanity, i.e., by history. In any case we understand nothing of the significance of modern atheism unless we see that it is linked to the meaning of the advancement of political economy—and we cannot completely detach one from the other.

Intellectual atheism makes us understand better that there is a certain theoretical use of God that we ought to abandon, but this use of God—if we may call it that—is still more intolerable on the practical level. Formerly, belief in God was a total engagement, and atheism was a sort of intellectual withdrawal and abstraction. Things have changed. Too often today it is atheism which has become a true commitment of one's whole self, while theism is a respectable opinion, vague and without efficacy. This explains the reserved attitude which more and more seems to be that of Christians. One day when I spoke before a group of seminarians, I was interrupted by one of them who exclaimed, "God, I don't know; I know Christ and humanity". It was an outburst which in the end would not be fully accepted by either the one who pronounced it or by those that heard him. The mistake surely would be to imagine that if a man rejects the God of the philosophers, he will surely accept that of the Christians. We have sufficiently emphasized the consistency and

coherence of atheism, and for our part, we consider fideism one of the greatest dangers of our time. There is a natural and implicit faith which reason ought to specify and deepen in order to render it receptive to the explicit and supernatural faith which is the gift of grace. It is none the less true that the god of deism—despite what is said, not that of Descartes, but of Leibniz, more commonly the god of Voltaire, and still more commonly, that of the ruling class—the god of traditional spiritualism and idealism is a false God that intelligence should criticize, and that practice should abandon. We must recognize this in all honesty: through centuries of bourgeois thought and behavior, God has been “compromised”. And a lived atheism is that which eliminates, in an ambiguous manner, these compromises.

The attitude of the Christian, therefore, in the actual situation, is particularly difficult. Denying all false gods, and first of all those that he bears within himself, in the very interior of his belief, he also affirms the true God. It is precisely here that the confrontation of Christianity and atheism is situated. Its place of honor is that which has been called the experience of the priest-workers. Their essential problem was not Marxism, as has often been repeated in a superficial, if not totally false manner; it was atheism. Their profound experience, which was overwhelming, was their meeting with atheist values and their genuine significance. It would seem that no Christian of our time can escape this problem. To what extent does the Catholic, by refusing everything that modern atheism presents him, place himself outside of reality and protect simply an idea of God, with neither content nor truth? In what degree, on the other hand, by participating in the values of atheism, does he risk compromising the purity of his faith and all its requirements? No intellectual solu-

tion, apart from experimentation, can be brought in advance to such a dramatic question. What is certainly sure is that, on one hand, no Christian can postpone till tomorrow bearing witness to Christ, and that on the other hand he must discover new forms of witnessing that have not been compromised, which will require the most difficult self-abnegation. Perhaps it will be possible to find here a practical application to the distinction that we made at the outset between *representation* and *aspiration*. Testimony cannot be absent, but sometimes it is even in the silence of words and gestures that its presence should manifest itself, more luminously than ever.

The word atheism, therefore, covers quite different realities. There is the atheism which is the rejection of false gods and the continual purification of our representation of God and of that which remains of idolatry and of the too human in the very life of God in us. There are methodological atheisms which are the result of the distinction of domains, rejecting God as an explanation even while retaining him as meaning and presence, and often associating itself with the feeling of respect: respect for souls in a neutral school situation, respect for what are sometimes called second causes in scientific knowledge, respect for language and gestures when they have lost their significance or have compromised it in a certain sociological context. There is finally a radical and mysterious atheism of the man who, in some degree, knows the true God and nevertheless refuses him voluntarily and consciously. The Christian should never forget that his faith and experience teach him that this latter atheism, the absolute and radical denial, really exists. What he does not know is who practices it. All the confusion comes from the fact that these forms of atheism, that conceptually can

be distinguished one from another, communicate in the lived situation. Methodical denial can easily harden into dogmatic denial; on the other hand, an apparently dogmatic denial may in fact conceal an implicit affirmation of God: false gods are always present, and the true God is always possible. What must especially be emphasized—because we can hardly resolve a problem if we haven't properly located it—is the new and actual significance of atheism. It has often been pointed out without showing the reason for it: God today is present everywhere and is being denied everywhere—he has never been the theme for so many plays and films, and this occurs at the very moment when the denial of God is most widely propagated. This is because God is not simply an intellectual problem—we are dealing here with the very meaning of life. It is a fact that our political and economic choices today are made for or against God. Proudhon was not wrong: God is indeed involved at the center of *Contradictions Economiques*. We are at the point where metaphysics includes politics and economics. Whether we regret this or whether we rejoice in it, it is also at this level that ultimate problems must be taken up and examined.¹⁰

Translated by JOSEPH E. CUNNEEN

1. Thus Carrel explains that his experience as surgeon and doctor, his studies of the regeneration of tissues and cicatrization of wounds have helped him appreciate "the curative effects of prayer." "When prayer becomes habitual and really fervent, its influence becomes very great, like that of the endocrine glands. The sense of the sacred would seem to have an analogy

with the need for oxygen, and prayer has a respiratory function. Man needs God like he needs water and oxygen." (quotations from Carrel, *Prayer*)

2. At least if we take the word in its precise present-day meaning and not as a synonym for the reason (*causa sive ratio*) of Spinoza, for example.
3. For Brunschvicg this would mean that the God of historic Christianity could not be the true God. We understand this phrase in the sense that the representation of a God in whose name war was waged could only be a falsified and perverted representation.
4. F. Dubarle, O.P.: *Scientific humanism and Christian thought*, Blackfriars, 1955.
5. Of course Marx wrote that atheism ought to be surmounted. But this only means that socialism considers the non-existence of God as established, and from then on could start out concretely from the existence of man. In *Political Economy and Philosophy*, he writes: "From the fact that man has in practice become visible in nature, it has become practically impossible to ask if there exists a foreign being, a being placed above nature and man—this question implying the non-essentiality of nature and man. Atheism, in as much as it is a denial of this non-essentiality, no longer has meaning, for atheism is a denial of God and by this denial of God affirms the existence of man. But socialism as such no longer needs this mediation; it begins with the awareness, both in theory and practice of man's presence in nature considered as being."
6. Cf. *Leçon inaugurale* of Jan. 15, 1953 by Merleau-Ponty (publications of the Collège de France), re-edited as *Eloge de la philosophie* (Gallimard).
7. This term is taken in the sense used by Mounier in *L'Affrontement chrétien* (Seuil).
8. Cf. Claude Tresmontant, *Essai sur la pensée hebraïque* (Cerf, 1953).
9. Cf. author's *Le sens du dialogue*, especially chapter "Affirmation et négation".
10. I say also, because it is obvious that the direct testimony of what is most abruptly transcendent is always legitimate and necessary; the prophetic vocation and mystical experience are eternal data of Christianity. By trying to clarify one aspect of reality, we do not wish to deny others.

THE UNINTENTIONAL INFLUENCES OF TELEVISION

V. A. DEMANT

Television, we are told, is going to play a very great part in people's lives, and we had better learn how to live with it. Very well then, but to live with something is not only to do things with it; it means also being formed by it. It is like marriage. When G. K. Chesterton read in an American journal that when a man marries he should realize that he gives up 50 per cent of his independence, G. K. said this was of course an example of transatlantic optimism. Fifty per cent is a gross under-statement; and, what is still more important, the person who shares life with another has not only to surrender a good deal of his own choosing; he soon finds that he is a different self from what he was when he first undertook the gamble. That is why married happiness requires faith and trust and cannot demand to know clearly where it is leading and what it is making one.

A television set, however, is not a spouse; there is one vast difference between them. The difference is that what we see on the screen is not modified by its contact with us, and of course it is

not projected on to us personally. The only feature of television which slightly corresponds to a partner's reaction to our behaviour and attitude is an estimate made at the producer's end of what the majority of viewers want. But this is so impersonal and submerges each viewer in an anonymous majority that, for all intents and purposes, television, like sound radio, is a one-way influence. True, we have to turn it on and can turn it off, a condition we sometimes wish, in our more arrogant moments, could obtain in marriage. But once the expensive apparatus is installed and regular habits of use are formed, the television screen is there, providing experiences for certain hours a day which will be affecting us unless there are strong inducements to cut them out. It is quite certain that, on the whole, viewing, like listening in, is an activity in which deliberate decision to attend, and discriminating selection, diminish with frequency and regularity of use. This is particularly the case for most of our population whose standards of taste, principles of choice, and strength of will are not much trained by other influences outside their work. A man said to me in a cinema queue, 'I'm fed up with the pictures; but I keep on going'. Somehow, the habit had got a hold which his will was not able to break even though the habit had ceased to satisfy, and there was no easily available counter-satisfaction. It is in such ways that the newspaper, the cinema, sound radio, and television have enormous influences on people's lives, out of all proportion to the intentions of producers and those catered for.

Canon V. A. Demant is the author of RELIGION AND THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM (Scribner). A previous article, "Christian Ethics and The Welfare State," appeared in CROSS CURRENTS (Fall 1952). The present article was first published in THE B.B.C. QUARTERLY (Autumn 1954); its British context accounts for certain emphases and omissions capable of revision if thinking of American television.

Six years ago I wrote (in *The B.B.C. Quarterly*, Oct. 1948) on 'The Unintentional Influences of the Wireless.' Much of what I said there applies also to television, and I would wish that all who read this article could consult the earlier one. In it I raised a few questions which equally concern television. What, for example, is the effect of these things not upon the discriminating listeners or viewers who get their 'education' elsewhere, but upon those for whom it is the regular and almost the only contact with the world of thought, science, recreation, art, and religion? Do they form men's outlooks, or do men come to them with outlooks formed by other means? There are factors at work which do not depend upon the programmes or upon what people decide to listen to or look at. I am therefore not making judgements upon the quality of television programmes, but asking what kind of minds and persons television is likely to produce among populations for which viewing becomes one of their main life-habits.

In my former article I suggested that sound radio accentuated the drift of our times to make our culture disproportionately auditory. The real world impinged upon the mind as sound and mainly through human words—a highly selective but almost continuous torrent of speech or musical sound. Television has of course redressed this kind of abstraction by making contact visual as well as auditory. What unintentional influences is this change likely to have? I think there are some advantages and some additional dangers. In so far as viewing replaces listening, the highly cerebral activity of 'perpetual' listening which tends to make for neurotic and restless personalities will have a smaller part in the forces impinged on the soul; I say 'soul', for the hidden inner life of man is influenced in subtler ways than through the clear attention of the

mind. Then there are two other new factors. One has to decide to look at the screen, make arrangements to do so, and often get the co-operation of others; it is a much more deliberate 'set to' than turning on the sound radio. Secondly, there are many fewer things one can do at the same time while listening; I can think only of knitting. (I am leaving out eating and drinking which are purely passive activities, though it appears that they help to keep a new trade in televiewers' amenities going.) These two factors, along with the circumstances that while you can hear round a corner you cannot see round a corner, may free television viewing from one of the most harmful results of sound radio, what I call a lack of respect for what is communicated to you. Sound background listening to music has not this bad influence, but the habit of letting voices speak and not listening is psychologically and morally unhealthy. Therefore I think that the much more deliberate action required in viewing has one up on sound radio. But when novelty has worn off and when people are habituated to spending certain periods before the screen, without much definite intention, then a disposition to look without seeing may well become a disintegrating characteristic of a television age.

Habit is two-thirds of life. Ever since Aristotle, moralists have insisted that the art of life consists in cultivating good habits so that a large part of our existence goes on well without at every turn having to make mental calculations and voluntary effort. In this way men have reserves of energy for those parts of life that require enterprise, insight, and decision. If every tiny action had to be 'decided' we should all be exhausted in two days—for though man is endowed with a principle of freedom it is limited in its extent. We are all represented, to some extent, by the girl who wanted

to stay on with her grandmother after a holiday, and explained: 'Granny is very strict and I know exactly what I may and may not do; but my parents believe I should make every decision for myself and it wears me out'. The lesson of this is that the inner development of man requires a proper proportion between the things they do every day in a conditioned kind of way and the things that call for conscious effort; of course, good habitual behaviour requires, at first and from time to time, real conscious choices and some tricks, as anyone knows who has tried to break a habit they disapprove of and want to be free from.

Television viewing easily becomes a habit sustained for some other reason than the satisfactions it directly gives—such as falling in with family routine, a special kind of social togetherness before the screen, and, above all, the ease with which action can be looked at, as compared with radio listening and doing things oneself. When the new house and its furniture are adapted to regular viewing, and daily time-tables adjusted to it, there is a strong inducement to participate even when the inclination is weak. This, I have no doubt, may encourage the growth of over-passive characters, and even counteract all we mean by development of personality.

There is another general consideration. Because it adds vision to sound the television screen seems a bit more like 'real life' than mere verbal communication. What is there seen is therefore more likely to be unconsciously accepted for the actual world, whereas it is, of course, like sound programmes, a highly fabricated or selective version of it. That is because what people experience every day by habit makes impressions of 'what things are really like' much more radical and lasting than that arrived at by critical observation and

inquiry. And because viewing is a somewhat more relaxed activity than listening, the slices of life offered on the screen, often in dramatic and sophisticated form, may well be dangerously sheltering folk, and the young especially, from the real routine, depth, simplicity, untidiness, or complexity of real existence. I am inclined to think that if over-much listening may make for restlessness and instability, over-much viewing may have a doping effect. The world picture offered by television is bound to be more exciting, dramatic, and varied than ordinary existence. I think, therefore, we should be on the look out lest the facility and success with which television can make the world look interesting—and the better it does the job the more it will do this—should encourage either of two disastrous tendencies. One is the tendency to acquiesce in flat, ordinary experiences because you can always get a bright hour or two when viewing; the other is to feel that life has cheated you because it is not nearly as thrilling as the screen world.

There is one other unintentional influence of a general kind to be noted before we come to the special ones exerted by what is seen on television. It is bound to give a certain slant to men's notions of the relation between personal and public life. Viewing, like radio listening, is a private or domestic activity. But this individual or family world is invaded by public happenings without the motor activities and expense of going to see what goes on or taking part in it. The psychologists have not yet given much attention to the effect of getting much of the satisfactions of observation, news, and amusement without the effect of going after them at some cost—in money, energy, and selective interest. I have a suspicion that being able to watch the kaleidoscope selection provided by television

—along with listening, going to the cinema, and looking at the picture paper—may clamp down the normal human impulses to find significance in overcoming obstacles, in co-operation and good rivalry with others, in the rough and tumble of public life, and in overcoming some of the limits of our finite existence. And the clamping down of these impulses by disuse may well be one of the causes of two unfortunate features of the mid-twentieth century. I refer to a cult of violence in many of the young—and not so young—which gives vent to a perverted sense that one can make one's mark only by dominating or injuring; and to a growing indifference to politics and other aspects of the ordering of public life.

Group television watching can no more be called a social activity than a number of monologues in the same room is a conversation. It is the contiguous enjoyment of several private experiences. So is visiting an art gallery or a football match. Some things, of course, are better done alone. But television watching is likely to take up too much of people's spare time which had better be mainly spent in real give and take occupations and recreations. I am not impressed when I hear that it keeps the family together—for it is together only in the same sense as boys fishing in the same pond, not in the sense of being a team, each doing some bit in a common interest, argument, game, or practical necessity. Modern conditions have already gone a long way to weaken co-operative intercourse in the more local and intimate spheres of life and to make individuals feel lonely. Gregariousness in enjoyment and observation is no substitute for real community. And when we consider that millions of viewers in our own country are spending many impressionable hours in seeing the same scenes and actions, the standardizing effect must appear alarming to

all who know that a living community requires a variety of interest and contribution, built up by the little or great resources of each member.

To turn now to the programmes themselves, we have to ask what effect the special kind of scenes provided by television has on the human mind; also their variety, the rate and combination of items. The actual world in which men, women, and children live their concrete lives has not the selective focus, the far-reaching range, the epitomising limitation, the rate of change from one scene to another, the incongruous passage from one impression to another, which mark one day's television programme. When viewers can 'watch with mother', look at a play, witness a game, see personalities groomed for the part, observe how things are made and jobs carried out, vicariously share in parlor games, be introduced to a foreign event on Eurovision, peer into unstaged privacies through 'The Roving Eye', see under-water marvels, and the rest, an impression is made at the subconscious level that the world as experienced is much more discontinuous, interestingly selective, and artificial than in fact it is. And when we learn, from Alastair Cooke's report, that in the United States 'in the past six weeks, millions of people from coast to coast have had at their elbows an incomparable mystery story, a gripping trial, an hilarious entertainment, and a first-class political brawl—all in one, and on tap twice a day, from ten in the morning to twelve-thirty; then from two till five-thirty' we may well ask what perspective viewers get when they spend a great proportion of their waking day with highly skillful and artificial mixtures of fiction and remote fact.

Artificial presentation of significant slices of life and human situations is part of any advanced culture. We have it in the theatre, the lecture room, the

laboratory, the picture gallery, the variety show, and the newspaper. Provided these things are not definitely deceptive in fact or proportion or debasing in result, they do no harm and can be a part of education into the art of living. But when a plethora of these selective pictures occupying several hours of each day can be had without stirring from one's own home, this picture world can easily be taken as a 'second nature' and weaken men's powers for dealing with the real problems their actual situation presents them with. Sir Ernest Barker, the political theorist, whose career, beginning in a country cottage, is one of the educational epics of our time, has felt the problem acutely. In his autobiography, *Age and Youth*, he quotes two foreign critics. One is a German man of letters who writes:

To depend exclusively on an artistic fare consisting of substitutes, of technical reproductions of sounds and colours, is bound to deprive us gradually of our appetite for spiritual adventure . . .

(meaning the adventure everyone has it in them to experience by using their inner forces to mould their lives and environment, and not to depend only on the forces that move in on us from without; this 'spiritual adventure' is not exclusively religious). Then a French teacher and journalist is quoted as saying:

Such is the constraint of noise and images that everything sounds and shows itself without being heard or seen; the superficial excitation of our attention creates habits and reflexes without our inner being having any part in them. The worst of modern inventions is the technique of continuous repetition, the suppression of silence.

Barker himself adds: 'It is so easy to get into this shadow world and man is a lazy being. You have nothing to do in order to enter'. Occasional experience of a 'shadow world', if it is de-

vised and accepted as such, can be a vitalizing influence. But if it occupies the main part of people's off moments they will get a distorted impression of reality.

That, of course, is not the intention of those who devise, arrange, and produce television programmes, and my account has been almost entirely critical because I have confined myself to the unintentional influences. Those at the producers' end find their task part of real life, it is their work. But a feature which begins with the script writer, and is complete only after a lengthy preparation demanding the co-operative effort of a team of varied workers and artists, does not appear like that to the viewer. He sees only the finished product; and that not as a piece of productive skill but one item among a number of others—perhaps a drama in the same evening's programme as 'What's My Line?', an international games tournament, and a fake driving test. The consumer is tempted to succumb to an increasing mental flitter which incapacitates him for growing discriminatory principles of judgment. The only criticism I am inclined to make of the producers' side is that too many items seem to be cooked up just to fill in viewing time, and not to be put on for their own excellence as something which television can do better than any other medium. The result is often neither informing nor diverting; not serious, interesting, nor amusing.

We badly need a 'philosophy' for the best use of technical achievement, and that is a matter for education in the widest sense. It will not do to assume that every device of technical skill will on balance be a good thing, that its benefits are bound to outweigh its harmful effects. For every artificial enlargement of human experience there are corresponding dangers, and the

young especially should have some guidance in their mental, artistic and character training which will equip them to use responsibly the torrent of experiences so easily offered with modern technical appliances, and fortify them against being pulped into formless impressionable jellies. There is still

some healthy 'consumer resistance'; it needs to be nurtured and sharpened up. But if it is to be based on something more positive than mere weariness with this or that, a new field of education will have to be opened up, not only in the school but in parental and other unofficial spheres.

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THE ROMAN INDEX OF PROHIBITED BOOKS

HUMPHREY J. T. JOHNSON

The Romans burnt the books of the Jews, of the Christians, and the Philosophers; the Jews burnt the books of the Christians and the Pagans; and the Christians burnt the books of the Pagans and the Jews.' So writes the elder Disraeli in his essay on the 'Destruction of Books' and we cannot feel sure that the philosophers, both ancient and modern would not have done the same had it been in their power to do so. The tradition that the Alexandrian library was used as fuel to heat the baths because the Caliph Omar held that all profitable knowledge was contained in the Koran is rejected by modern historians. It is now agreed that when Omar's general 'Amr occupied the city the great assemblages of books which had been brought together by the Ptolemies had already suffered heavily in earlier troubles. If, however, the story of Omar's vandalism be a late fiction we are assured by the author of *Curiosities of Literature* that much of the ancient poetry of the Persians perished in consequence of an edict of the Mohammedan ruler of Khorassan, who declared that those of his faith had no use for any book save that of the Arabian prophet. But a day came when the tables were turned and on the capture of Granada it is said that several thousand copies of the Koran perished in the flames under the direction of the Inquisitors and even that of the great Cardinal Ximenez himself fearful lest their survival would

prove an occasion of backsliding to the new converts.

In the Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum ac Munerum* by which the Index was reformed, Leo XIII started with the burning of magical books as a result of St. Paul's preaching at Ephesus (Acts xix, 19) and sketched the history of the Church's attitude towards pernicious literature before the invention of printing. Her condemnations were primarily theological in scope at this epoch and only in the second place concerned the diffusion of dangerous writings. The warfare against books, revived in our own day by the demand for the destruction of works by National Socialists or by Communists was inspired, partially at least, by the belief held by all parties that a tradition deemed pernicious would languish if preserved only through oral transmission.

With the multiplication of books consequent on the invention of the printing-press the bonfire lost some, at least, of its efficacy and needed to be supplemented by other methods. The exact date of the discovery of printing is unknown but in 1740 some learned men in Germany celebrated its tercentenary and 1440 may be regarded, so far as there is one, as its traditional date. Paul II (1464-71), if less of a humanist than Nicholas V, yet welcomed the introduction of printing into Italy. But before the century was out the Popes had become alive to the fact that the new art could assist the spread of what was harmful as well as of what was good. Sixtus IV issued instructions to the Archbishops of the Rhineland with regard to the use of the press, while a Bull of Alexander VI required previous ecclesiastical censorship for all books

Msgr. Humphrey J. T. Johnson contributes regularly to the leading English Catholic reviews. The present article appeared in the DOWNSIDE REVIEW, Spring 1955.

printed there, a provision made universal by the fifth Lateran Council in 1515. This pope also directed that harmful writings already in circulation should be suppressed, to expedite which printers and others were to notify books in their possession, to the Archbishops, their vicars and *officiales* under pain of excommunication incurred *latae sententiae*.

Secular rulers felt themselves menaced from the same quarter and in 1535 Francis I prohibited the unauthorized printing of books under penalty of death. To the Sorbonne was accorded the right of deciding what should be printed. In England the Crown assumed the right of censorship after the Reformation, but it never issued what might be called an Index, though certain books were ordered to be burnt by a common hangman. The first Index properly so-called seems to have been that printed at Louvain in 1546 by order of Charles V for use in Spain and the Spanish Netherlands. The Spanish Index was not the only non-Roman one but it was the most famous. It included the Roman Index but contained certain additions of its own. In 1558 Philip II enjoined the punishments of confiscation and death against anyone who should sell or keep in his possession a book prohibited by the Index. 'The contest with Protestantism in Spain under such auspices was short,' says Ticknor (*History of Spanish Literature* [1863] i, 422, 423). The Spanish Index at one time occupied 1,200 pages. The last edition was published in 1790. A supplement published in 1805 includes Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (Ticknor iii, 366). It was not however till 1892 that the Holy Office forbade the issue of new editions of the Spanish Index in the following enactment,

'Standum unice Indici romano librorum prohibitorum ejusque regulis,

et prohibendas esse novas Indicis Hispani editiones. (Boudinhon, *La Nouvelle Législation de l'Index* 2nd ed. [1925], p. 218.)

The celebrated Roman *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* is a work but little known to Catholics in this country, so little known in fact that Mgr. R. A. Knox is able to assure Arnold Lunn that though he is ever poking about libraries only once in his life did he see a copy of it (*Difficulties*, 1952 ed., 202). Most Catholics of my acquaintance could not, I suspect, mention off-hand six of the 5,000 entries it contains.¹ I doubt whether there is a canonist in England who could pass with credit an examination in its contents. We seem to have no serious study of the Roman Index by an English Catholic. Indeed the work of the Anglican controversialist, Joseph Mendham, entitled the *Literary Policy of the Church of Rome* and dedicated to Sir Robert Inglis, the anti-Newmanite Member for Oxford University, would appear to be the most which has been done in this direction. It is however marred by a singular acrimony of tone. Yet much of the material for a serious work is provided in Lord Acton's magnificent collection of editions of the Index at Cambridge.

The first of the long series was promulgated by Paul IV. It was of such severity as to alarm scholars and booksellers who felt deprived by it either of indispensable means of pursuing their studies or threatened with loss of livelihood. This Index distinguished three classes of books: (i) those written by authors who had erred *ex professo*, the whole of whose works were forbidden, even if they contained nothing against the Faith, such a measure being known as a condemnation *in odium auctoris*; (ii) books by authors of whose writings only certain ones were forbidden; (iii) books containing pernicious doctrines

written by authors who were for the most part anonymous. Paul IV's Index included the *De Monarchia* of Dante, Boccaccio's *Decamerone* and Lorenzo Valla's work on the Donation of Constantine. England is represented by Henry VIII, Cranmer, Tyndale, John Astoe,² John 'Hoperus' (Hooper) and John Oldencastle.³ Other forbidden writings include unauthorized versions of the Bible, the Talmud with commentaries on it and magical works. Needful though an Index may have been, Paul IV's was so severe that not even Pastor defends it. The Sorbonne and the Spanish Inquisition ignored it, though the Spanish authorities co-operated with the Roman Inquisitors in burning copies of the Talmud at Cremona (Pastor, *History of the Popes*, xiv, 276-80).

Pius IV issued a somewhat milder Index known as the 'Tridentine' one. It was promulgated in 1564 and prefixed to it are the ten rules for the interpretation of the Index which though slightly altering their form disappeared only in recent times. Books by propagators of heresy, 'heresiarchs', as they were called, were condemned as before. Among them were Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and two lesser known Reformers, Kaspar Schwenkfeld⁴ and Balthasar Huebmaier (Pacimontanus). Books by other heretics not treating of religious matters were allowed. The ninth rule prohibited writings on 'geomancy, aeromancy, pyromancy, onomancy, chiromancy and necromancy', as well as those treating of sorceries, auguries, auspices and magical incantations or making predictions of the future. But books written in aid of navigation, agriculture and medicine were to be permitted. In 1570 Pius V founded the Sacred Congregation of the Index which existed till 1918 when the censorship of books was transferred to the Holy Office by the *motu proprio* of Benedict XV, *Alloquentes proxime*. An attempt to build

up an *Index Expurgatorius* for books which needed correction came to nothing but traces of it remain in the formula *donec corrigatur* inserted after some entries in later editions of the Index.

No more than a cursory glance at those which appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is needed to show that the quarters from which danger was most apprehended in addition to Lutheranism (as Protestantism was then called), were Judaism and Sorcery. The 'observations' prefixed to the Index contain not only one on the Talmud, but one also on the 'Magazor', a manual of Jewish ritual which was not allowed to circulate in any language except Hebrew. An 'observation' concerned with Jean Bodin's *Démonomanie* disappeared only in the time of Benedict XIV. In the edition of 1664, promulgated by Alexander VII, the old division of writings into three classes is dropped and an alphabetical order definitely adopted. This is said to have been done not merely for purposes of convenience, but because a belief had grown up that reading books in the first class constituted a graver sin than reading those in the other classes. A curious entry in this edition is one ordering the deletion of some words in the Breviary lessons for the feast of St. Catherine of Siena.

In the following century Benedict XIV promulgated new rules for the censorship of books in the Apostolic Constitution, *Sollicita ac provida*, and gave to the Index legislation the shape it retained down to the reforms of Leo XIII. A perusal of Benedict XIV's *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* is instructive. The edition of 1744 before the condemnation of Voltaire is already a work of ample proportions, containing with a supplement 639 pages. Of greater interest is the edition produced towards the end of the pontificate after the condemnation of the Encyclopaed-

ists and reprinted in 1770. Among English writers whose works are prohibited wholly or in part are Henry VIII and James I, Stephen Gardiner, John Knox, Tyndale, Lancelot Andrews, Francis Bacon, Joseph Bingham (author of *Antiquities of the Christian Church*), Gilbert and Thomas Burnet, Cudworth, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Hobbes, Locke, Swift (*Tale of a Tub*), Tillotson, Woolston, Sherlock, Selden, Hume, Camden, Richardson and Ephraim Chambers, editor of the *Cyclopaedia*. But what may strike us as the most curious entry in the whole volume is *Paradise Lost*, smitten by censure on its translation into Italian by Paolo Brolli in 1732. France is represented by Montaigne, Bayle, Descartes, Malebranche, Fénelon, Voltaire and Rousseau, as well as by lesser known writers and by pastoral letters of various Bishops, including one of Cardinal de Noailles. Dante, Boccaccio and Guicciardini are still among condemned Italian writers, while Holland is represented by Grotius, Germany by Puffendorf and Sweden by Swedenborg. A more general condemnation of the literature of the Enlightenment was made by Pius IV in 1778 by which works seeking to overthrow the foundations of religion are condemned en bloc. Catholics and Protestants were now to a limited extent able to make common cause and the Jesuit apologist for the Index, Father F. A. Zaccaria, can quote the 'pseudo-Bishop' of London, Edmund Gibson, on the harm done by bad books (*Storia polemica dei proibizioni di libri* 1777, 243, 269).

Permissions to read heretical literature had of course to be granted from the beginning to meet the controversial exigencies of the hour, but they were not granted too readily; for the law assumed that the great majority of men were weak and could not be relied upon to resist the blandishments of heresy if it were presented in an attractive guise.

Paul V felt anxiety at the number of permissions which were being granted and for a time they were revoked altogether under Gregory XV. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century they could occasionally at least be obtained by laymen and Chateaubriand relates that, when he was ambassador in Rome, if he wanted to read a prohibited book he would on remission of a very small sum of money to an ecclesiastical official for his trouble, receive a written permission to read it, with the proviso however that he might only do so if his conscience allowed. Permissions to read and keep prohibited literature were, as was natural, most readily accorded to Bishops.

But from the time of Gregory XVI to that of Leo XIII there existed a short list of authors whose writings were considered so dangerous that reservation with regard to them was made in the quinquennial faculties granted to the local Ordinaries. The authors forbidden to members of the Hierarchy included only one Englishman, Jeremy Bentham; four of his works are condemned by name in the Index catalogue. The others include five Frenchmen: Charles-François Dupuis (1742-1809) and Constantin-François Volney (1757-1820) *savants*; Charles-Antoine Guillaume Pigault-le-Brun (1753-1835) novelist; Jacques-Antoine Dulaure (1755-1835) archaeologist and historian, and Pierre Jean-Baptiste Chaussard (1766-1823) man of letters. The works of the first four were forbidden to Bishops without special mention of any one of them. Chaussard's book *Fêtes et courtisanes de la Grèce* was expressly forbidden by name. It is described in the 'Nouvelle Biographie Universelle' as an *ouvrage assez superficiel et souvent licencieux*. The author was an ecclesiastic who during the Revolution had mounted the pulpit of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and preached the doc-

trine of theophilanthropy. The other authors forbidden in the *facultates quinquennales* were M. Reghellini, Louis-Joseph-Antoine de Potter (1786-1859) and Giambattista Casti (1724-1803). Reghellini was a native of Chios. His principal book *Examen du Mosaïsme et du Christianisme*, a work of three volumes, was published at Paris in 1834 and condemned two years later. De Potter was a historian of 'enlightened' views who played a part in the Belgian Revolution of 1830. He was the author of a life of Scipione di Ricci, the Jansenist Bishop of Prato-Pistoia, whose papers had been entrusted to de Potter by the Bishop's family. The last of the authors forbidden to Bishops, Giambattista Casti, was a cleric who became a writer of opéra bouffe. He travelled about Europe enjoying at one time the patronage of Joseph II and Catherine II. At the age of 78 he wrote an indecent poem of twenty-six cantos *Gli Animalì Parlanti*, a skit on the antediluvian world. The works of these authors, Bishops might neither read nor give permission to others to do so. In the case of other forbidden writers, permission to read them might be conceded to trustworthy priests but not, it would seem, to the laity. The regulations of the Index do not appear to have contemplated a society in which the ablest Catholic apologists might be laymen.

But when the nineteenth century was well advanced, not even the warmest apologist on behalf of the Index could deny that it had failed to realize the hopes placed in it by the Popes of the Counter-Reformation. Protestantism had shown itself to be no merely transitory phenomenon but something which had come to stay, and now Free Thought was doing likewise. Rules drawn up for the conditions of the sixteenth century when books and readers were relatively few could not without grave inconvenience be applied to those

prevailing in the nineteenth. When the Index was instituted learning meant familiarity with the writers of antiquity. By the nineteenth century a new European literature had come into being, much of it falling under one or other of the prohibitions contained in the Index legislation but acquaintance with which was indispensable for entrance into cultured society. The congregations of the Holy Office and of the Index could moreover no longer count on the co-operation of the civil power.⁵ Voltaire's writings were first burnt and then tolerated. Then came the freedom of the Press with all the advantages and disadvantages it brought in its train. Benjamin Constant's plea, in his treatise *De la liberté des brochures, des pamphlets et des journaux*, that a free journalist writing in Paris would show greater responsibility than one writing clandestinely in exile at Amsterdam or Geneva, helped to bring about a change in the French law and before the end of the nineteenth century all Europe except Russia had a 'free press'. When the State disinterested itself in what its subjects read and wrote, there were many who came to look upon ecclesiastical censorship and prohibition of books as anachronistic. Yet upon the vast majority of Catholics they did not in all probability weigh heavily. In countries like Italy and Spain the reading even of the higher ecclesiastics seems to have been restricted. Stendhal says of Cardinal Somaglia, Secretary of State to Leo XII, that he hardly dared to open a book lest he should find heresy in it, and that this represented an attitude which was not uncommon among the clergy of his day. Allowing for the necessary element of exaggeration in such statements, they nevertheless convey to us something of the impression created by the clergy on the lay mind.

But if in Southern Europe few Catholics felt the Index as an oppression,

further north in France, Belgium and Germany restlessness began to manifest itself. Demands for a reform of the Index or even for its total abolition began to make themselves heard. When one such was made to Gregory XVI on the ground that there were now so many good books as to render it unnecessary, he is said to have replied that the abolition of the Index would be as sensible as the removal of restrictions on the sale of poisons, on the ground that antidotes could be purchased in the same shop. Lord Acton, than whom few men could have known more about the Index, was a severe critic of it. He charged it with being obstructive to scholarship. 'One of the great instruments for preventing historical scrutiny', he wrote, was the Index of Prohibited books, 'which was accordingly directed, not against falsehood only, but against certain departments of truth. Through it an effort was made to keep the knowledge of ecclesiastical history from the faithful and to give currency to a fabulous and fictitious picture of the progress and action of the Church. The means would have been found quite inadequate to the end, if it had not been for the fact, that while society was absorbed by controversy, knowledge was only valued as it served a controversial purpose.' ('Conflicts with Rome' *Home and Foreign Review*, iv, 1864, p. 676.) As the Vatican Council drew near, pleas were heard from the Bishops of France and Germany for a revision of the Index legislation, on the ground that much of it was now obsolete. The Bishops of the latter country stressed the anxiety caused thereby to penitents and confessors alike. When the Council met, a note of irony was heard. It was said that if the reading of books was forbidden, no less must it be forbidden to hear them read aloud. There was general agreement that the situation was unsatisfactory and the Council had the laudable

intention of undertaking a reform of the Index. This was found to be impracticable and nothing had been done when Pius IX died, except a reduction in the number of classes of books for the reading and keeping of which excommunication *latae sententiae* was incurred. It was limited by the Constitution *Apostolicae Sedis* of 12th October 1869, to books of apostates, of heretics defending heresy and those condemned by apostolic letter. This excommunication was reserved to the Holy See *speciali modo*.⁶

Leo XIII set himself to the task of revision, but at the outset he was confronted with a dilemma. Should reforms be in the direction of mitigation or of greater severity? If the aim of the Index was to prevent the Faithful from meeting with sympathetic presentations of the heretical point of view, then not only must the reading of books be curtailed, but a vast amount of periodical literature must be proscribed as well. To-day even this would be totally insufficient; for heresy may be heard in the theatre, at the cinema, on the radio. It may be heard in the factory, the office or the club. To achieve the aims of the Popes of the Counter-Reformation, it would be almost necessary to forbid Catholics to discuss religion with non-Catholics. If on the other hand a deepening of intellectual life among Catholics was needed, a reform in the way of mitigation was called for, unless, of course, dispensations were issued on so lavish a scale as to render the law nugatory. The Leonine reform was embodied in the Apostolic Constitution *Officiorum ac Munerum* which appeared on 25th January 1897. It was followed in 1900 by a new Index, in which several well-known names such as *Paradise Lost* and *De Monarchia* are no longer to be met. The new legislation permitted the reading of books by non-Catholics, even though they treated of religious topics,

provided that they contained nothing against the Catholic Faith. But if its tendency was to render the ancient rules 'un peu plus douces', they were substantially unchanged. Moreover, a whole class of literature hitherto ignored by it now fell under the laws of the Index.

In 1832 the minds of the Swiss Bishops had been exercised as to whether the laity could be prudently permitted to read newspapers which had not previously been submitted to episcopal censorship. Rome had replied that the Faithful should have recourse to their confessors for the solution of this matter. Leo XIII included periodical literature within the scope of the Index legislation and approximated the rules governing it to those regulating the reading of books. Hair-splitting discussions now arose among the canonists touching the properties of *diaria*, *folia* and *libelli periodici*.

The Leonine reforms left substantially unaltered the laws regulating the reading and keeping of prohibited books and those who had counselled far-reaching changes had been unable to make their voices heard. One such was the erudite canonist, Mgr Auguste Boudinhon, who advocated the introduction of a new principle under which books should be classified according to the degree of danger they were apprehended to possess, while the grounds of this danger were to be stated. Boudinhon further criticized the Index for its failure to make more appeal to the conscience of the individual and its excessive severity towards Catholic authors who had exhibited certain tendencies rather than been convicted of definite errors. 'It is abundantly evident that the Index is unsatisfactory' he concluded (s.v. Index, Hasting's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*). This conclusion was widely held. 'That the rules of the Index need further adapta-

tion to the times,' wrote Mr. Wilfrid Ward, 'I have never heard denied, and the highest authority has recently admitted, that many of its provisions have become obsolete.' ('Liberalism and Intransigence', *Nineteenth Century Review*, June 1900, p. 970.)

In the intervening half-century some changes have been introduced into the form of the Index. In the edition of Pius XI (1922) the *pars prior* contains the pertinent provisions of the *Codex Juris Canonici*. In that of Pius XII (1948) the old division of the Index into a *pars prior* and *pars posterior* disappears and the catalogue of condemned works is preceded only by extracts from the *Codex* (canons 1395-1405), which themselves reproduced in substance the decrees of the Council of Trent with the modifications introduced by Leo XIII. The most important of these canons is 1399 which enumerates the eleven classes of books prohibited *ipso jure*. In the catalogue of condemned writings the penalty of excommunication reserved *speciali modo* to the Holy See is said to be incurred only in the case of books condemned by apostolic letter, which are marked with a cross in recent editions of the Index.

Opposition to the Roman Index began at an early date. The Sorbonne and the Spanish Inquisition ignored that of Paul IV, while Philip II objected to the Tridentine one on the ground that it omitted books which had been placed on the Spanish Index. Coming to a more recent period, we find the French Provincial Council of Toulouse in 1850 and that of Rheims in 1857 omitting all mention of the Index. They added it later, however, on the demand of the Roman Congregation charged with the revision of their acts. Mgr Knox believes that in the period following the Reformation, English Catholics had a genuine grievance against the Index, but he feels able to assure Arnold Lunn

that he need not fear to become a Catholic on account of it. 'But I think it is fairly clear', he writes, 'that it [the Index] does not give much trouble to the laity nowadays.' (*Difficulties*, op. cit., p. 202.) Mgr Knox is strangely silent about the clergy. A similar conclusion has been reached by one occupying a very different standpoint from his. In a polemical work *Roman Catholicism and Freedom*,⁷ the Non-conformist divine, Dr. C. J. Cadoux, argues that time spent in attacking the Index is wasted since the provisions are so mildly interpreted in this country. In the early nineteenth century the situation was not very different. When his antagonist, Robert Southey, told Charles Butler that he (Southey) would soon be on the *Index Expurgatorius* and that then Catholics would not be allowed to read him, Butler was overcome with indignation. 'How little is the Doctor acquainted with the state of those whom it pleases him to revile? Few of them know of the existence of the *Index Expurgatorius*; scarcely any know whether the Doctor's book will be named in it. If this should be the case, it will no more prevent them from reading it than the mention of Milton, Locke, Hume, Robertson and a hundred others on the Index prevents Catholics from reading their writings. Dr. Lingard', he continues, 'justly observes that the authority of the Index was always very confined, and in many countries never acknowledged.'⁸ Of even greater interest are the remarks of Archbishop Murray who, giving evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on the State of Ireland on 17th May 1825, said, 'the *Index Expurgatorius* has no authority whatever in Ireland; it has never been received in these countries and I doubt very much whether there are ten people in Ireland who have ever seen it'. (Phelan and O'Sullivan, *Digest of the Evidence taken before the Select*

Committee of both Houses of Parliament to inquire into the State of Ireland, 1824, 1825, Part I, p. 232). The confusion between the *Index Expurgatorius* and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, understandable in a layman like Butler, is strange in an Archbishop of Dublin.

As the nineteenth century advanced, the question which presented itself most urgently was not a juridical one concerned with the scope of the authority of the Tridentine Index, but a human problem. Could the degree of intellectual culture needed to enable Catholics to hold their own be achieved by one whose reading was confined to such works as the canons permitted? If not, how was a remedy to be sought? Newman could not escape the fact that the liberal education, which he so much desired for those English Catholics who were capable of receiving it, called for something wider. In 1850 we find him writing to Rome to ascertain how far the Tridentine legislation was to be considered operative in England. The reply which he received must have been highly gratifying to him. In a letter to Mgr Talbot, at that time his friend, written on 23rd October, he says, 'I have lately had good advice from Rome that one may act as if the rule about prohibited books had not been promulgated in England'. ('Some Newman Letters' in the *Venerabile*, October 1938, p. 43) Manning, however much he may have disagreed with Newman on other topics, seems to have shared his sentiments over this one, and to have contented himself with telling his clergy that they should not read heretical books without good reason for doing so.

The situation admittedly changed when Leo XIII declared that the new Index legislation foreshadowed in the Constitution *Officiorum ac Munerum* applied universally and, on 23rd May 1898, the Congregation of the Index

gave the reply *Affirmative* to the *dubium* '*Utrum dicta Constitutio vim obligatoriam habeat etiam pro regionibus britannici idiomatis quas tacita dispensatione frui quidam arbitrantur?*' No one could have expected a different answer, but Boudinhon reminds us that the Bull does not expressly mention the abrogation of existing customs, and thinks that special circumstances may exist in countries the majority of whose inhabitants are Protestants.⁹ The answer of the Congregation of the Index concerned the English-speaking countries. A milder one envisaging, it seems, England only, was given by Propaganda, to whom Cardinal Vaughan and the English Bishops had had recourse for guidance on the appearance of the Leonine Constitution. It is somewhat complicated, but Boudinhon interprets it as indicating that the *status quo* might remain in this country unchanged.¹⁰ This interpretation is favoured by the fact that in its joint pastoral on 'Liberal Catholicism' issued by the Hierarchy in the last week of the century, though indiscriminate and unregulated reading was reprov'd, no direct reference to the Leonine legislation was made. This situation seems to have survived the promulgation of the *Codex Juris Canonici*. For when it came into force, though the attention of the Faithful was drawn to the new provisions touching fasting, abstinence, and marriage, no English Catholic considered himself debarred from reading a book or a newspaper which he could have conscientiously read before.

It is difficult now to conceive of the laws of the Index fully operating in any society except one controlled by ecclesiastics either directly or indirectly. In the absence of such a condition a knowledge of Canon Law which few laymen possess seems to be postulated in every layman who can read. The layman must know that when a name of a book

disappears from the Index he is not, as he might innocently suppose, allowed to read it. For a friendly moral theologian will tell him that as likely as not it belongs to a class of literature condemned en bloc, its withdrawal from the catalogue signifying no more than that it is not a work to whose danger the Church at present wishes to call special attention. A graver difficulty, facing confessor and penitent alike, lies in the extreme difficulty which must often occur of determining whether a given book falls within one of the numerous categories of prohibited literature. This is especially so in the case of many biographical, historical and scientific works. What, moreover, may be considered 'dangerous' varies from century to century and between class and class. A book may be 'dangerous' to one who reads little which would be innocuous to one who reads much. If the faith of one young man is endangered through reading a particular book, more harm may be done to another by forbidding him to read it, than the reading of the book itself would do. For in the latter case he may conclude that the 'priests' are seeking to bolster up their own shaky position by stifling truth. To some, and probably they are not a few, fantastic, unscholarly or uncharitable Catholic works do more harm than the writings of unbelievers. Newman said that he knew of no work which would so readily make him an infidel as Faber's book, *The Blessed Sacrament*. Discussions, therefore, among theologians as to whether the reading of three, four or five octavo pages of a forbidden book is needed to constitute a mortal sin are apt in our time to seem unhelpful.

Summing up the position as it existed in the early years of the present century, Boudinhon says that while the legislation of Leo XIII 'resulted in the better observance of the rules for the

publication of books' it did not apparently 'modify the practice as regards the reading of prohibited books'. His final conclusion is that 'the tendency of the practice among Catholics at large is to reduce these condemnations to the proportions of the moral law.'¹¹

1. I take this figure from Mr. Paul Blanshard's *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 1951, p. 182.
2. This writer is not mentioned in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
3. The prohibition probably envisaged the account of Oldcastle's trial.
4. It was Schwenkfeld's fate to have his books placed on a Protestant Index as well.

5. When in 1741 the Holy See concluded a concordat with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, it was provided that a copy of each foreign book arriving in the port of Naples should be sent to the Archbishop for examination as to whether it contained anything contrary to the Catholic Faith before it could be exposed for sale. (*Raccolta di Concordati*, Vatican Press, 1919, 355.)
6. Cf. Canon 2318.
7. Fourth ed., p. 61.
8. Butler, *Vindication*, 1826, lxxxiii, lxxxiv. For the quotation from Lingard's *Tracts*, p. 232 is given as a reference but it appears to be incorrect.
9. *La Nouvelle Législation de l'Index*, 2nd ed., p. 66.
10. *Ibid.*
11. s.v. Index, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed.

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PROUST

And when I awoke in the middle of the night, not knowing where I was, I did not even know at first who I was; I had only in its primal simplicity a sense of existing, such as may flicker in the depths of an animal's consciousness; I was more destitute than the cave-dweller. (I,5)

At the beginning of the Proustian novel there is, then, an instant which is not preceded by any other, just as with Descartes or Condillac, just as with Valéry. But if this instant is of a "primal simplicity," that is because it is about to become the starting point of the immense development which follows it; but it is oriented, not toward this "becoming", but toward the nothingness which precedes it. Here this first moment is neither a moment of fullness nor of birth. It is pregnant neither with its future possibilities nor with its present realities. And if it reveals a fundamental emptiness, that is not because it needs anything from "ahead", but because it lacks something from "behind": something which is *no longer*, not something which is *not yet*. One might call it the first moment of a being that has lost

Georges Poulet is Professor of Romance Languages at Johns Hopkins University. *CROSS CURRENTS* has published the introduction to his *ETUDES SUR LE TEMPS HUMAIN* (Plon) in its Winter 1955 issue. The present essay represents a concluding section of the same work. The translated passages from *A LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU* are those of C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (*REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST*, two-volume edition, Random House), with a few changes.

GEORGES POULET

everything, that has lost itself, because it is dead:

We have slept too long, we no longer exist. Our waking is barely felt, mechanically and without consciousness . . . (II, 464)

The sleeper awakes from sleep more naked than a cave-man. His nakedness is the nakedness of a lack of knowledge. If he is reduced to the state in which he is, that is because he does not know who he is. And he does not know who he is because he does not know who he has been. He knows *no longer*. He is a being who has lost his being because memory and the past have been lost:

Then from those profound slumbers we awake in a dawn, not knowing who we are, being nobody, newly born, ready for anything, our brain being emptied of that past which was previously our life. And perhaps it is more wonderful still when our landing at the waking-point is abrupt and the thoughts of our sleep, hidden by a cloak of oblivion, have no time to return to us progressively, before sleep ceases. Then, from the black tempest through which we seem to have passed (but we do not even say *we*) we emerge, prostrate, without a thought, a 'we' that is without content. What hammer-blow has the being or the thing that is lying there received to make it unconscious of anything . . ." (II, 271)

He who surges now into existence seems less a being than one emptied of his being. He is a being *in vacuo*, in emptiness; a being "without consciousness", since consciousness can only be consciousness of something. He is "without content", "more lifeless than a jelly-fish", returned to "the most elementary kingdoms of nature"; a being that cannot be described otherwise than by call-

ing it "the being or the thing that is there."

But how is this thing which is there, in a moment "outside of time and all measures", how is it going to be able to leave this moment which isolates it before and behind? How shall it repair its monstrous ignorance of time, place, and its own person? Doubtless, to the animal feeling of its own existence, there corresponds the feeling of the existence of a world in which it seems confusedly immersed. Awakened, and at the very instant when it awakes, this sleeper discovers himself, and discovers at the same time that he *is there*, there, that is to say somewhere: at a certain time, in a place, among things. But suppose he awakens in the middle of the night, in darkness: in what room is he? in what place? in what time? Certain images of places and times come and go, excluding each other and superimposing themselves upon him:

Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves, and not anything else, and by the immobility of our conceptions of them. For it always happened that when I awoke like this, and my mind struggled in an unsuccessful attempt to discover where I was, everything would be moving round me through the darkness: things, places, years. (I, 5)

Vertigo of images. The world, as the awakened sleeper discovers it, is indeed a world of things, but of interchangeable things, in which nothing is attached to one particular point of space or duration; a world of things doubtful rather than certain; possible rather than necessary; a world similar to the legendary images of Golo and of Geneviève de Brabant which the play of the magic lantern substituted for the walls of the room of the child Proust, to make "a stained glass window, flickering and momentary."

The being that is uncertain of himself wants to lean upon the stability of things. But what stability can be offered by things which are "even more unreal than the projections of the magic lantern"? Unreal as the forms he has just encountered in the world of sleep:

. . . deep slumber in which are opened to us a return to childhood, the recapture of past years, of lost feelings, the disincarnation, the transmigration of the soul, the evoking of the dead, the illusions of madness, retrogression towards the most elementary of the natural kingdoms (for we say that we often see animals in our dreams, but we forget almost always that we are ourselves then an animal deprived of that reasoning power which projects upon things the light of certainty; we present on the contrary to the spectacle of life only a dubious vision, destroyed afresh every moment by oblivion, the former reality fading before that which follows it as one projection of a magic lantern fades before the next as we change the slide. (I, 617)

The awakened sleeper, Proust, is never entirely able to detach himself from this first figuration of the world. One would say that if Goethe taught himself to represent the universe as a theatre of marionnettes, Proust learned to represent existence as the "flickering and momentary" play of the light of a magic lantern. The Proustian world is always to be an intermittent world. A world in which things project themselves before the eyes in instantaneous images which in turn are replaced by other images belonging to other moments and other places; a world in which the apparition of any one image does not necessarily entail the apparition of the one following; where one may find oneself going backward as well as forward; Where "the magic chair may carry us at all speed in time and space"; a world of "doubtful visions," whose lacunae the

mind will have to fill up by its conjectures, whose vacillations it will have to remedy by its beliefs. The Proustian world is a world anachronistic in itself, without a home, wandering in duration as well as in extent, a world to which the mind must precisely assign a certain place in duration and space, by imposing its own certitude upon it, by realizing oneself in the face of it.

But in order to impose our certainties upon the world, we must first find them in ourselves. Now what certainties can a consciousness without content find in itself? What can it offer, denuded of all, beggar that it is? The human being on the threshold of awakening, the child at the onset of night, finds itself face to face with "doubtful visions destroyed every minute," and confronted by things of which it is impossible to know "whether they are themselves and not others." Thus the child Proust in the room that the projection of the magic lantern metamorphosed:

... The mere change of lighting destroyed the customary impression I had formed of my room, thanks to which the room itself, but for the torture of having to go to bed in it, had become quite endurable. For now I no longer recognized it, and I became uneasy, as though I were in a room in some hotel or "chalet", in a place where I had just arrived for the first time ... (I, 8).

a place one no longer recognizes, which therefore can be any other place, a place which has become doubtful, strange, anonymous; a place disconnected from its occupant, because nothing in it responds to the demand of his thought. Then, in the consciousness of the hostile refusal of things to put themselves in touch with the mind, the child Proust takes account of the depth of his solitude, and the anguish begins:

Having no world, no room, no body now that was not menaced by

the enemies thronging round, invaded to the very bones by fever, I was utterly alone; I longed to die. (I, 506)

For the anguish of solitude is not only that of being detached from things and beings; it is being detached from fixity, from the permanence one would like to have beings and things possess and give us by return; it is to feel oneself betrayed, without any help from them, to the indeterminate power of thought, which ceaselessly imposes upon us metamorphoses, which perpetually changes us into another "self", and which every instant makes of us, and for us, a stranger.

Thence proceed those contractions and rebellions of the threatened parts of our whole selves

which we must recognize to be a secret, partial, tangible and true aspect of our resistance to death, of the long resistance, desperate and daily renewed, to a fragmentary and reiterated death such as interpolates itself through the whole course of our life ... (I, 510)

successive deaths, more imminent, more reiterated, more total in proportion as a thought without content finds in itself no resource for establishing fixity and consistence.

The human being, for Proust, therefore, is a being who tries to find justification for his existence. Not knowing who he is, either he is like someone stricken with amnesia who goes from door to door asking people to tell him his name, or he feels himself to be what things indifferently become in him: a bundle of anonymous images that obliterate themselves and reform, like the iridescent spray from fountains of water. He is nothing or anything by turns, anything which is still nothing. Now this being who is nothing finds himself thrown into a moment lost in the midst of others, that is to say a moment which resembles nothing and rests on nothing.

And since this instant is inevitably going to be annihilated by another, he sees in this instant his own death, and he does not know whether he will be born again, or into what sort of being he will be reborn:

I think each day is the last day of my existence (letter to Nathalie Clifford Barney).

All my effort has tended in the opposite way [from Maeterlinck's], not to consider death as a negation, for this is meaningless and contrary to all death makes us feel. It manifests itself in a terribly positive way. (Letter to G. de Lauris)

For to be dead, for Proust, is not simply to be no more; it is to be *another being*. Such is a man who after an illness is shocked to see that his hair has turned white.

And when I realized that I felt no joy at the thought of her being alive, that I no longer loved her, I ought to have been more astounded that a person who, looking at his reflection in the glass, after months of travel, or of sickness, discovers that he has white hair and a different face, that of a middle aged or an old man. This appalls us because its message is: "the man that I was, the fair young man, no longer exists, I am another person." And yet, was not the impression that I now felt, the proof of as profound a change, as total a death of my former self and of the no less complete substitution of a new self for that former self, as is proved by the sight of a wrinkled face capped with a snowy poll instead of the face of long ago? (II, 833)

What is death but to be different from oneself? The fear of death is not so much the fear of no longer feeling, and no longer being conscious; it is the fear of no longer feeling that which one feels, and of no longer being conscious of that of which one is conscious. Yet such a death seems an ineluctable reality, not only at the end of total existence, but at the end of each of these tiny closed exist-

ences, of these "drops of time" which are each one of the moments of our life:

. . . truly a death of ourselves, a death followed, it is true, by resurrection, but in a different ego, the life, the love of which are beyond the reach of those elements of the existing ego that are doomed to die. (I, 510)

Condemned then to a fragmentary and successive death, not knowing whether he will come to life again or in whom he will come to life, the human being such as Proust depicts is haunted by the anguish of this substitution of self for self which for him is death. Against this anguish he has only one recourse: to give himself the assurance of survival, to believe that, beyond all this, one will be able to *find oneself again*. But it is impossible for this faith to assure him as to the future, since one cannot find there anything imaginable; since this future is the present of the monstrously inconceivable being into which death will have changed us. From this side, *from the side of the death to come*, the grave is insuperable. The future is closed by death; confronting the closed future, we are in anguish.

Free-floating anguish, indeterminate, "at the service one day of one feeling, the next day of another." But whether it presents itself under the form of the indefinable dejection into which the spectacle of a strange room throws us, or under the form of the anxiety of the child who waits in vain for the kiss of his mother before going to sleep, fundamentally this anguish of a being who, finding himself in an existence which nothing, it seems, can justify, incapable of discovering for himself a reason for being, incapable at the same time of finding anything which guarantees the continuation of his being, experiences simultaneously horror of a future which changes him, contempt for a present which seems powerless to establish him,

and the exclusive need of saving himself, come what may, from his cruel contingency by discovering in the past the basis of this being that he is, and yet that *he no longer is*.

For if it is impossible beforehand to burst open the precincts of death, is it not possible to do so, one might say, behindhand? If we are always *on this side* of our death to come, are we not always *on that side* of a death *already come*, a death beyond which lies our past life? Is there not then an act by which one might be able to rediscover himself and the basis of his existence?

This question is answered in the strange beginning of Proust's novel, where, with hardly an initial moment admitted, the thought gets underway and begins to march, but in reverse. A journey backwards, as if at the very moment the being discovers his existence, he experiences as well the need of sustaining rather than fulfilling it, of giving himself reasons for being rather than reasons for acting.

Proust's novel is the history of a search: that is to say a series of efforts to *find again* something that one has lost. It is the novel of an existence in search of its essence.

One is no longer a person. How then, seeking for one's mind, one's personality, as one seeks for a thing that is lost, does one recover one's own self rather than any other? . . . What is it that guides us, when there has been an actual interruption . . . ? There has indeed been death, as when the heart has ceased to beat and a rhythmical friction of the tongue revives us . . . The resurrection at our awakening—after that healing attack of mental alienation which is sleep—must after all be similar to what occurs when we recapture a name, a line, a refrain that we had forgotten. And perhaps the resurrection of the soul after death is to be conceived as a phenomenon of memory. (I, 776).

II

In Proustian thought memory plays the same supernatural role as grace in Christian thought. It is this inexplicable phenomenon that comes to apply itself to a fallen nature, irremediably separated from its origins, not to restore it integrally and at once to its first condition, but to give it the efficacy to find the highway of its salvation. Remembrance is a "succour from on high" which comes to the being in order "to draw him from the nothingness out of which, by himself, he would not have been able to emerge." Also it appears continually in the work of Proust under a form at once human and supra-human. It is at one and the same time an unforeseeable, "involuntary" thing that is added to the being, and the very act of this being, the most personal act because constitutive of the person. And as there are some graces which fall on rich soil, and others on barren ground, some graces to which one responds and others which one ignores, so with memories. There are numerous examples in the work of Proust of these mysterious solicitations which a spirit distraught by its own ends fails to heed. More numerous still are those in which a debased memory finds itself reduced to being only a vassal of the intelligence or a sort of habit: grace corrupted, which then loses its efficacy and becomes a "frozen memory", a "memory of facts":

. . . the memory of facts, which tells us: "You were such," without allowing us to become such again, which avers the reality of a lost paradise, instead of giving it back to us through remembrance. (*Pastiches et Mélanges*, p. 197)

a memory no longer supernatural, a fallen memory by the will of which it is vain to hope to "reestablish ourselves in that state we were in," for we can do nothing by our own strength and our

own will, and all depends from the first on supernatural chance.

But if all depends from the first on this miraculous contingency, if it is this originally which is the first cause, it is not a unique cause; it calls for our collaboration; it exacts the maximum effort from us. The Proustian memory has often been identified with the affective memory of the psychologists. And—psychologically speaking—it is that without doubt: that is to say, a revival in us of a forgotten state of mind. Furthermore the very term *involuntary*, by which Proust qualifies it, seems to confirm this identification, since for the psychologist the affective memory is in the final analysis spontaneous and unforeseeable, the simple raising of old emotions up into the mind; a raising up in which the mind assists less as an actor than as a patient. But for Proust profound remembrance is not only that, something involuntarily undergone, but at its point of arrival in us something which is or which ought to be the point of departure for our spiritual action. It is an invitation, an appeal, which is addressed to all our being, and to which all our being ought to respond. It opens to us a road through the depths, but it is up to us to advance on that road. Paradise lost is returned to us if we wish it, but only if we wish it.

It is for that reason that there are in the Proustian novel so many examples of abortive memories and portions of the past ultimately lost. For that reason also there are many more memories which, brought to light, leave only, after the spectacle of their brief resurrection, the regret for a "paradise lost", lost for the second time. Just as for the Scholastics there was an infinity of degrees in the "perfection" of grace, so for Proust there is an infinity of degrees in the "perfection" of memory. But in his case each of these degrees is like that of one

descending scale, and sometimes the being seems stopped at one level, sometimes a little lower, when what he seeks is away below. But most of the time "we lack the strength to penetrate to the very depths where truth lies, the real universe, our authentic impression."

Nothing could be more false than to consider Proust's novel a simple novel of the affective memory. That would be to confound it with the novels of Loti, each one of which, and from beginning to end, is a journal of such emotional encounters, mysterious wells, by which the soul should be able to penetrate to the depths of itself, but into which it is more often content simply to peer. And nothing could be more inexact than to make Proust the author of a purely psychological novel, in which everything is explained in the final analysis, as with Taine or Ribot, by the law of the association of ideas. This would be to confound him with a writer of romances like Bourget, who moreover wrote novels whose entire plots are articulated about a central phenomenon of affective memory.

From this point of view the most famous of all the passages of Proust, the episode of the madeleine, ought not at all to seem to us to have exhausted the meaning of the novel. It contains it without doubt, but it does not reveal it. Or rather, if it reveals something of it, it is precisely that the whole misery lies beyond the psychological explanation of it: "I still did not know and must long postpone the discovery of *why* the memory made me happy."

The real significance of the episode of the madeleine resides entirely in precisely this: that it gives us a moment of happiness. To the unhappy instant with which the book began there now succeeds a happy instant; as if the grace of memory consisted in exchanging the one for the other. In the moment of

awakening one sees the hero discover a nocturnal world, anguished, in which he knows neither who he is nor whether things are as they seem; in the moment of remembrance we watch him find himself in diurnal life, in the broad daylight of a Sunday morning of his childhood, surrounded by customary things, in a familiar time and place: "Everything that took *form and solidity* had sprung, town and gardens, from my cup of tea."

Form and solidity. If it is true then that remembrance is an exchange, it is also true that the moment exchanged has no longer the tragic inconsistency of what it replaces. It is a moment in which things have a form, in which they are solid, in which one knows what they are as well as one knows who one is. And it is such a moment because it represents this daily face of the life of childhood, this *face of the sun*, in which things in full light offer their form and solidity to a being who addresses toward them his desire and his faith. Deep remembrance is only the return of a deep impression. Now if it appears to us so beautiful, if its return makes us so happy, that is because it expresses between the feeling being and the object felt a spontaneous accord in which the desire of the one meets with the solidity of the other; as if the external world were now precisely what we would desire it to be:

For a desire seems to us more beautiful, we repose on it with more confidence, when we know that outside ourselves there is a reality which conforms to it, even if, for us, it is not to be realized. (I, 539)

If reality conforms to it, then, and only then, we can *believe in it*, and not simply feel it. Thus the deep impressions are not merely impressions we are content to submit to, even in a repetitive fashion, but experiences in which

we add something to what they bring us, namely the adherence of our *complete being*, that is to say our love. Such a desire is experienced by Marcel for the little milk-seller who passes along the length of the train:

She passed down the line of windows, offering coffee and milk to a few awakened passengers. Reddened with the glow of morning, her face was rosier than the sky. I felt in her presence that desire to live which is reborn in us whenever we become conscious anew of beauty and of happiness . . . Alien to the models of beauty which my fancy was wont to sketch when I was by myself, this strapping girl gave me at once the sensation of a certain happiness (the sole form, always individual, in which we may learn the sensation of happiness), of a happiness that would be realized by my staying by her side . . . I was giving the milk-girl the benefit of what was really my own entire being, ready to taste the keenest joys . . . (I, 498)

When we are young, at the age I had reached at the period of my walks along the Méséglise way, our desires, our faith bestow on a woman's clothing an individual personality, an irreducible essence. (I, 994)

Desire and belief: terms almost interchangeable which express the two aspects of the same activity, an activity of all one's being. For just as the perfection of memory demands the conjunction of a given object and an effort of the mind, so that which is discovered deeper than memory, the primitive impression, contains for us a given object and a movement on our part to seize it. A movement which, in so far as it issues from the being, is called *desire*, and which in so far as it applies itself to and rests in the object is called *faith*.

In the depths of being, then, what comes to light is a moment of the past which is exactly the inverse of the present moment of awakening: a moment

when, instead of being separated from things, and of not being sure whether they are themselves or other things, one is sure they are different from all others; and that because one now has the power to bind oneself to them, to confer upon them an individual particularity, an irreducible essence:

Moreover—just as in moments of musing contemplation of nature, the normal actions of the mind being suspended, and our abstract ideas of things set on one side, we believe with profound faith in the originality, in the individual existence of the place in which we may happen to be—the passing figure which my desire evoked seemed to be not any one example of the general type of 'woman', but a necessary and natural product of the soil. For at that time everything which was not myself, the earth and the creatures upon it, seemed to me more precious, more important, endowed with a more real existence than they appear to full-grown men. And between the earth and its creatures I made no distinction. (I, 146)

If the primitive impression, then, is worthy of *faith*, that is because it involves a *moment* and a *place*; and not, as with the being of awakening, a moment which can be any moment, a place that can be any place; but a moment so well defined in time and space that it cannot be confounded with any other, and of so great an authenticity that we cannot doubt it. Extreme depth where truth lies, little universe having its own particular time and place in which our *authentic impression* rediscovers itself in its lost reality, thanks to memory:

... what I had long lost, the feeling which makes us not merely regard a thing as a spectacle, but believe in it as in a creature without parallel ... (I, 50)

What was lost and what is found is not just time, but a fragment of time to which clings a fragment of space; and in the interior of this small universe, the

self, the individual is indivisibly bound by its faith and its desire to this moment of time and to this point in space. From a feeling of existence detached from times and places, the being finds himself brought back by deep remembrance to a first feeling, truly original, constituent of himself and of the world, the act of faith by which the sentient being adheres instantaneously, locally, to sensible reality.

In bringing us back thus, across the past, to a primitive impression, Proust reminds us of Condillac: "The only means of acquiring knowledge," Condillac says, "is to go back to the origin of our ideas, to follow the generation of them, and to compare them . . ." But if Proust goes back to the origin, it is not by analysis and a taking of things apart, but by a synthetic intuition—remembrance—because it is not a question for him of arriving at a simple entity, but at a primitive complex which analysis would irremediably lose.

It is rather to Rousseau that he must be compared. For the one, as for the other, at bottom, at the origin, there is a natural identity between the feeling self and the thing felt. But with Rousseau identity is posed simply as such; with Proust, on the contrary, it appears as proposed rather than given; it must be achieved in a movement of the self toward the object and culminate in belief.

For this is the point to which we must always return, to these beliefs with which most of the time we are quite unconsciously filled, but which for all that are of more importance to our happiness than is the average person whom we see, for it is through them that we see him, it is they that impart his transitory grandeur to the person seen. (I, 708)

Only a transitory grandeur, doubtless, as it is also only a correspondence between him who regards and that which

is regarded; but an imperishable grandeur as well, because the object thus transfigured by belief, detached by the very fact of the general motion of things and the flux of duration, leaves upon the mind of him who *believed in it* an indelible image. This image *will find itself again*. In the midst of a magic lantern world, a vacillating unreal world made of "doubtful visions" in which one cannot believe, the awakened sleeper, if he remembers, will find once more in the depths of his memory, in his first impressions, this *passing grandeur* which an act of childlike faith has fixed in him forever.

III

... The scent of hawthorn which strays plundering along the hedge from which, in a little while, the dog-roses will have banished it, a sound of footsteps followed by no echo, upon a gravel path, a bubble formed at the side of a waterplant by the current, and formed only to burst—my exaltation of mind has borne them with it, and has succeeded in making them traverse all these successive years, while all around them the once-trodden ways have vanished, while those who trod them, and even the memory of those who trod them, are dead. Sometimes the fragment of landscape thus transported into the present will detach itself in such isolation from all associations that it floats uncertainly upon my mind, like a flowering isle of Delos, and I am unable to say from what place, from what time—perhaps, quite simply, from which of my dreams—it comes. But it is pre-eminently as the deepest layer of my mental soil, as firm sites on which I still may build, that I regard the Méséglise and Guermantes 'ways.' It is because I used to think of certain things, of certain people, while I was roaming along them, that the things, the people which they taught me to know, and these alone, I still take seriously, still give me joy. Whether it be that the faith which creates

has ceased to exist in me, or that reality will take shape in memory alone, the flowers that people show nowadays for the first time never seem to me to be true flowers. (I, 141)

In this sort of nothingness or of night, which extends behind him, deep down within him, and which is called the past, the being in search of himself has now discovered certain luminous points, isolated; pieces of landscape, fragments of his former life which survive the destruction of all the rest. Behind him is no longer total nothingness but a starlighted nothingness. Doubtless because of their isolation, their remoteness, these vestiges of the past appear today to be without force. Nevertheless, as in the astrology of the Middle Ages, it is owing to them alone, and to their influence, that the living being can hope for the support of his own personality and for the power to confer some reality upon the world which offers itself to his eyes today. For he no longer possesses the efficacy of belief and desire to adhere strongly to things. He has "ceased to believe in the truth of the desires directed outside of himself" which he continues to form.

Without renouncing these desires, he has ceased to think them realizable. He has no more hope in the future, and he no longer enjoys the present. From the time of his youth, Proust verified this detachment from desire and this drying up of faith:

Even the disinterested joys of hope are not left any more to us. Hope is an act of faith. We have undeceived its credulousness; it is dead. After having renounced enjoyment, we cannot any more be enchanted with hope. To hope without hope, which would be wise, is impossible. (*Les plaisirs et les jours*, p. 232)

And later, in a letter to Princess Bibesco:

Alexander is right when he says that to cease hoping is despair it-

self. But though I never cease to desire, I never hope. Perhaps also the great austerity of my life, without journeys, without walks, without company, without sunlight, is a contingency which renews in me the perennality of desire. (*Cahiers Marcel Proust*, No. 4, p. 119)

Perennial desire, but without hope in the future as without faith in the present. Proustian desire, then, can *hope*, hope to find an object of faith, only in looking backwards. He comes to "hope without hope", wisdom of the impossible. As in the Kierkegaardian repetition, Proust ends by no longer placing hope in anything except the past. And what can he hope from the past except to be reestablished in his faith?

This restoration of faith is memory. Ephemeral faith doubtless, and one which lasts for him only for the instant in which he remembers, *but* for as long as it does last, the being who remembers finds he has become once more a being who once had faith. The immense force, the living force of these small luminous fires he has rediscovered, rises from the depths of an obscure firmament where their rays reside and lengthen, extending their splendor and warmth into the present moment. It is in them alone that he can hope for a reality and a resting place. The being is sustained, from underneath, by a faith he no longer possesses. There is a sort of continued creation of himself, of the being one is by the being one has been, of the moment in which one recollects by the moment that one recollects; the Proustian existence is an existence which always risks destruction or decay, unless it be supported and ravished by the grace of memory.

. . . We do not believe in the beauty of life because we do not remember it, but if perchance we smell an old fragrance, we feel elated; likewise we think we no longer love the dead, but this is because we do not remember them;

if once again we see an old glove, we dissolve in tears, upheld by a grace or a flower stalk of remembrance. (*Letters to René Blum*, etc., p. 61)

Like Christian grace, Proustian reminiscence appears very well indeed under the form of a *flower stalk*, but the essential point is that here the action of this support is exerted not from top to bottom but from bottom to top. That is the reason Proust employs the expression *basement* (*soubassement*), and *deep layer* (*gisement profond*), and also *supporting terrains on which one has to lean* (*terrains résistants sur lesquels on s'appuie*). In the Proustian world, it is not God, it is simply the past which confers on the present its authentic existence. It is *the already lived* that saves *the living*; otherwise it would fall into the insignificance of oblivion, even before being *lived*.

But in order for this past to be indeed the continuer of the self and the founder of an authentic present, in order for it to be the source of our restored faith, will it not be necessary that *in its time* it had been invested by us with the power which it now exerts over us? It seems that only the memory of a moment of faith can create a new moment of faith. Or should then the being who remembers find himself forced to go back from memory to memory in search of a creative moment, as philosophy strove to proceed from cause to cause until it reached a creative cause?

Let us recall, however, the alternative formulated by Proust in the citation which opens this chapter: "Whether it be that the faith which creates dries up in me, or whether it be that reality forms itself only in memory . . ." Alongside the moment of primal faith there would be then another source of present reality, a source that cannot be assigned either to the single original moment or to the single actual moment, but that

would be found *between the two*, in the memory:

We make little use of our experience, we leave unachieved in the summer dusk or the precocious nights of winter the hours in which it had seemed to us that there might nevertheless be contained some element of tranquillity or pleasure. But those hours are not altogether lost. When, in their turn, come and sing to us fresh moments of pleasure which by themselves would pass by equally slender and linear, the others bring to them the groundwork, the solid consistency of a rich orchestration. (I, 1002)

moments unachieved in their time, slender and linear, which seemed, however, to give the present a consistence, a reality that they themselves did not possess.

But if this is so, and it is so throughout the Proustian novel, the preceding theory becomes, if not false, at least insufficient. It is not necessarily in a moment of early faith that the being finds his creative foundation, since memory can join to a slender present an unachieved past, and their conjunction can bring to birth something that is achieved and that is consistent.

On the other hand, there would no longer be only certain privileged moments of the past which could have the chance of being saved from oblivion. Any moment could be regained, or better, brought to significance. There is no sensation, puny as it may be, which has not a chance to see the light again and find its completion in the present; as if, the interval of years being nothing, or equal simply to a brief distraction of the mind, this could, almost without solution of continuity, reassume the impression it had formerly left and bring to it now the complement it lacked.

But what is the nature of the complement? Assuredly it is not at all a question here of affective memory, but of an

act authentically new by which the mind operates upon remembrance as earlier, in infancy, it operated upon the first impression. One might call it an act of faith indefinitely retarded, then tardily accomplished; as if the reality regained in memory appeared richer in import, worthier of faith than it was lately in sensation. This is the invariable experience the Proustian novel gives us. For the adult being, there is something incurably imperfect in the present, something impure in exterior perception, which leaves the perceiver indifferent and incapable of believing in it; but let this present become past, let this perception become memory, and immediately with the same energy as the child in its act of faith, the adult adheres to this memory.

Faith centers in an impression that is immediate, or regained, or completed. Proustian thought always inevitably returns to the mystery of the relation between an object and a consciousness. It all comes finally to this question: how an exterior object can be transmuted into this interior and immaterial thing, as intimate to us as ourselves, in which the mind freely plunges, moves, takes delight and life.

But in immediate impression we know how rare and difficult this spiritualization of the object can be. The object is the thing which is there. Flower, tree, or church, steeples of Martinville or bushes of hawthorn, the thing is there, outside, in its existence as thing. To look at it is to feel oneself joined to it only by a sensation which attests less its reality than its absolute otherness. How shall we penetrate it, or draw it into ourselves when we have no affinity with it other than a sensation which we are well enough able to intensify and to repeat, but not to transcend? And yet already this very sensation invites us to do so. It gives us the further presenti-

ment of something it does not communicate to us, but of which it makes us divine the existence and desire of unsatisfied ecstasy in which the anxious being confusedly feels called to discover in a prolongation of sensation he knows not what secret:

. . . Suddenly a roof, a gleam of sunlight reflected from a stone, the smell of a road would make me stop still, to enjoy the special pleasure that each of them gave me, and also because they appeared to be concealing, beneath what my eyes could see, something which they invited me to approach and seize from them, but which, despite all my efforts, I never managed to discover. (I, 137)

It is the same in one of the most famous passages of the novel, the episode of the hawthorns. Before the flowering hawthorns the child on his walk experiences in the contact of the sensation the same feeling of pleasure and expectation. But this time, twice over, and in two quite distinct fashions, the sentient being leaps over the frontier of what is felt, and, going on to the end of the sensation, penetrates into the mysterious intimacy of the object. The first occasion is when, in the exaltation into which the beauty of the flowering bush throws him, he is no longer content to feel this beauty; he tries unconsciously to reproduce it in himself:

Higher up their corollas were opening, keeping around them so negligently, like a last vaporous garment, the nosegay of stamens which so entirely enveloped them with the mist, that when I tried to mime in the depths of my mind the gesture of their efflorescence, I fancied it, without being aware of the process, the flighty motions of a thoughtless and vivacious young girl. (*Chroniques*, p. 93)

Marvelous image, and so significant that Proust takes and uses it for the title of one part of his novel: *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleur*. For the mean-

ing of this image does not consist simply in its exactitude, in the felicity with which it translates what it describes; but also in the visible motion of the mind which brings it to its existence and its perfection of image. It seems here that one comes upon the spiritual operation ordinarily the most hidden, even from the eyes of him who performs it: the operation by which, *in miming within his own depths the exterior gesture of the sensible object*, one *imagines*, one creates something which is still the object of sense, but this time no longer outside: rather, on the inside, no longer strange and impenetrable, recognizable, identifiable: for this thing comes of us; it is us.

It seems that here we are assisting at the very genesis of an image: an image so perfect that surely the mind has, in this moment, accomplished the task incumbent upon it, even without clearly perceiving its nature. It has accomplished it, not without effort, but without realization, almost inadvertently; and not having recognized that it has found what it sought, it continues to search.

It is then that the second spiritual operation is accomplished. While the child remains in contemplation before the flowers, someone calls him and shows him a little farther on some other hawthorns, but this time of a different color, no longer white but pink:

Then, inspiring me with that rapture which we feel on seeing a work by our favourite painter quite different from those that we already know, or, better still, when some one has taken us and set us down in front of a picture of which we have hitherto seen no more than a pencilled sketch, or when a piece of music which we have heard played over on the piano bursts out again in our ears with all the splendour and fullness of an orchestra, my grandfather called me to him, and, point-

ing to the hedge of Tansonville, said: "You are fond of hawthorns; just look at this pink one; isn't it pretty!" And it was indeed a hawthorn, but one whose flowers were pink, and lovelier even than the white. (I, 107)

Between the instant in which the child sees the white flowers and the one in which he catches sight of the pink, there is, so to speak, no transition; nevertheless the first is the moment of a past sensation, and the other of a present sensation. The one achieves and crowns the other; it is not the repetition but the transfiguration of it. Hence the child's joy, a joy of a very particular kind, and one which the Proustian character experiences continually in the course of the novel. It is the joy of Swann, finding again in the visage of a servant the traits of a person contemplated some time before; that of Marcel in discovering in the Septuor of Vinteuil the little phrase of the Sonata. It is the joy that one always feels when one perceives under the variations of a "common type" a "same palpable quality", when one *recognizes* in what he feels something he recalls having felt before. To recognize is to identify; and to identify is to find an equivalent between what is there, outside, and on the other hand what is here, inside, within ourselves, since it is *our* memory.

In the passage on the hawthorns Proust indicated the two ways of going beyond the external object: sometimes by a direct effort which in making us mime interiorly the motion of the object gives us the "spiritual equivalent" of it—and it is an act of pure imagination; and sometimes by finding and recognizing this same equivalence in the depths of ourselves—and this is the peculiar act of memory.

"All impression," says Proust, "is double: half enveloped in the object, and half produced in ourself . . ." But

usually we pay attention only to the exterior part of the impression, which teaches us nothing of its nature or of ourselves. But when by an act of the imagination or of memory we extricate this interior part which is truly ours, then this "pure and disincarnate" essence withdraws from the exterior object, and also then from the ensemble of temporal contingencies in which its place is assigned as in a series; it no longer appears a determination of things, but as a free production of our mind. For the act of imagination or of memory is nothing other than that; to oppose to the exterior perception an image which might be our own creation; to raise up the impression into an expression; to find the *metaphor*. Such is the spiritual effort every tangible object demands of us.

We hear this immediate and urgent demand every moment of our lives, but nearly always we prefer easier tasks. It now and then happens, however, that in renouncing for some banal occupation this duty which present sensation incessantly proposes to us, we experience a kind of remorse, the remorse of having at the same time renounced ourselves, of having failed to bring to the light of day this being which is us, and which only exists and recognizes itself in the creative act of the making of images. Thus when on a road near Balbec Proust withdraws from the three trees that have addressed him in vain with one of those mysterious solicitations, he seems to hear them say:

If you allow us to drop back into the hollow of this road from which we sought to raise ourselves up to you, a whole part of yourself which we were bringing to you, will fall for ever into the abyss. (I, 545)

or again, when in the *Plaisirs et les jours* a poet who was giving a banquet refuses to extend hospitality to a stranger passing by because this wayfarer enjoined

the dismissal of all the other guests, he sees the stranger withdraw saying:

You will see me no more. Yet you owed me more than you owed to the others who presently will desert you. I am in you, yet for ever I am far from you, I am almost no more. I am your soul, I am you. (*Les plaisirs et les jours*, p. 210)

Thus almost always we allow a part of ourselves to be removed or to fall into nothingness: precisely that part of us which should have been created or recreated in the present moment. It is given us that we may make of it our substance. But we almost never do so, and for not having done so we lose our present existence.

On the other hand, we may also happen to lose it for the contrary reason: not because we have neglected sensation, but because we have allowed ourselves to be absorbed by it. So it is in the state of drunkenness:

... The alcohol that I had drunk, by unduly straining my nerves, gave to the minutes as they came a quality, a charm which did not have the result of leaving me more ready, or indeed more resolute to defend them; for while it made me prefer them a thousand times to anything else in my life, my exaltation made me isolate them from everything else; I was confined to the present, as heroes are, or drunkards; eclipsed for the moment, my past no longer projected before me that shadow of itself which we call our future; placing the goal of my life no longer in the realization of the dreams of that past, but in the felicity of the present moment, I could see nothing now of what lay beyond it ... I was glued to my immediate sensation ... (I, 614)

Glued, that is to say making a lump with the thing felt. Then it alone exists without possibility of equivalence. Its presence abolishes all the rest. There is no longer any past, no longer any future, no longer even that sort of distance which in the interior of the moment the

mind tries to establish between the sensation it experiences and the act by which it is conscious. The sentient subject has become what he feels. He has excluded himself from himself. Outward, in the object, he lives an intense, euphoric, but entirely passive life. Instead of transcending the object, he is engulfed in it.

State of pure passion, of brute sensation which is the very opposite of the creative activity by which the imagination reinvents the object in the self.

Whether it adheres too closely to the tangible object, or whether on the contrary it neglects it, Proustian thought succeeds very rarely in finding at once the metaphoric equivalent. In contrast to a Hugo or a Rimbaud, Proust hardly ever finds, on the spot, a corresponding image. Or, let us say, the image does not seem chosen by him with this characteristic of sovereign liberty which is precisely the property of invention. It sometimes happens, however, that, in a certain state of mind, confronted by such and such a sensation, the Proustian being somehow spontaneously forms the equivalent image. Thus Swann, amorous of Odette, hears the Little Phrase of Vinteuil's sonata, and as this little phrase has the effect of effacing his anxiety over material interests and so of creating in his soul a sort of margin, he finds himself *free* to inscribe upon it the name of his love.

Now this margin is precisely what time and forgetfulness produce in us. Between the reborn memory and the being we now are, before recognition, before the identification of the one by the other which memory achieves, there is this: the consciousness of a margin, a distance; and this margin appears in the interior region where one has ordinarily the feeling of being determined by causes or series of causes, of being the prisoner of time:

. . . Between our present state and the memory that suddenly comes back to us . . . there is such a wide distance that that fact alone, regardless even of any specific individuality, would suffice to make comparison between them impossible. Yet, if, thanks to our ability to forget, a past recollection has been able to avoid any tie, any link with the present moment, if it has kept its distance, its isolation in the depths of a valley or on the tip of a mountain peak, it suddenly brings us a breath of fresh air—refreshing just because we have breathed it once before—of that purer air . . . which could not convey that profound sensation of renewal if it had not already been breathed; for the only true paradise is always the paradise we have lost. (II, 994)

A single minute released from the chronological order of time has recreated in us the human being similarly released, in order that he may sense that minute. (II, 996)

Because the sensation which comes back to us, and from so great a distance, is not bound to the temporal motion which actually sweeps us along, we find ourselves for an instant detached from this current. We cease "to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal"; we feel *free*, free to determine ourselves, free to recognize ourselves in what we were, free to establish the metaphoric relation between our past and our present.

Sometimes, however, this relationship remains merely an outline within us. Memory then appears to be no more than a kind of negative; beyond the feeling of this margin which is created within us, we simply know that there is something we are unable to read. Of past and present only the latter shows itself clearly upon the field of consciousness, and yet between the two one still feels there is already an invisible affinity formed which one would like to be able to identify. Such is the phenomenon of the *already seen* that one finds in every

degree in the work of Proust. Sometimes the mind experiences it in the vaguest degree, and then it wonders and worries, searching vainly within itself for a corresponding image.

Sometimes the mind in approaching from a new angle a world once upon a time familiar discovers the unknown in the unknown, and, after a moment of hesitation, sees surge unexpected and assuaging from the depths of memory the sensible equivalent. And yet sometimes at the call of the present object it seems to spring complete, without effort, as if the silent work of memory had been precisely to prepare for this meeting, and then the sole duty of the mind is to *recognize* this identity of the past and the actual, and to recognize itself within it:

The concert began, I did not know what they were playing, I found myself in a strange land. Where was I to locate it? Into what composer's country had I come? I should have been glad to know, and seeing nobody near me whom I might question, I should have liked to be a character in those *Arabian Nights* which I never tired of reading and in which, in moments of uncertainty, there arose a genie or a maiden of ravishing beauty, invisible to every one else but not to the embarrassed hero to whom she reveals exactly what he wishes to learn. Well, at this very moment, I was favoured with precisely such a magical apparition. As, in a stretch of country which we suppose to be strange to us and which as a matter of fact we have approached from a new angle, when after turning out of one road we find ourself emerging suddenly upon another every inch of which is familiar . . . ; so, all of a sudden, I found myself in the midst of this music that was novel to me, right in the heart of Vinteuil's sonata. (II, 553)

Now to recognize oneself in a place, in a piece of music, in a sensation, is more than to regain this sensation; it is

to rediscover there one's own being. A passive memory has no more meaning than a brute sensation for Proust. Neither the one nor the other has anything to communicate except its obscure sensible reality. Neither the one nor the other by itself can raise the being to the expression of what it really is. The thought in search of itself glides over the sensation as over a smooth and impenetrable surface. It cannot rest there any more than it can found itself on an abstract memory of what it once was. For what has one been except what one has felt, and how shall there be any recognition unless one feels it anew? Perhaps the greatest difficulty of the Proustian enterprise consists in the fact that all knowledge can never cease to remain impression. It is possible to know only that which can once more become immediately contemporaneous to the heart. Now "knowledge in these matters being intermittent and incapable of surviving the effective presence of feeling", the result is that for Proustian thought the *knowing* as well as the *being* finds itself bound to a world essentially ephemeral and intermittent, the very affective or emotional world in which Maine de Biran had given up trying to find permanence and identities. It seems that the mind is caught in a dilemma: either of knowing nothing but what it feels, or of recalling it has felt without recalling how it has felt. In both cases it is condemned to never attaining its being.

The only cognition of self that is possible, then, is re-cognition. When at the call of present sensation past sensation resurges, the relationship established lays the foundation of the self because it lays the foundation of its own cognition. The being one recognizes as having lived becomes the basis of the being one feels to be alive. The veritable being, the essential being, is he whom one

recognizes, not *in* the past, nor *in* the present, but in the rapport which binds past and present together, that is to say *between the two*:

. . . The person within me who was at that moment enjoying this impression enjoyed in it the qualities it possessed which were common to both an earlier day and the present moment, qualities which were independent of all considerations of time; and this person came into play only when, by this process of identifying the past with the present, he could find himself in the only environment in which he could live and enjoy the essence of things, that is to say, outside time. (II, 995)

At this point the dialectic of being ends in Proust. One sees the whole length of the road it has traveled. Emerging from sleep, the awakened sleeper was first discovered empty of his past, without content, without connection with vacillating sensations, himself metamorphosable, unknowable, playing of time and death. Then, by the grace of profound remembrance, certain impressions of a totally different species surged up within him. These seemed to affirm the existence of a world of specific things, and to each of these things there was attached the action of a being who put his faith in them, and who found his reality in this act. But this being was infinitely remote; he re-found himself only after an intermittent and fortuitous fashion. His strength of faith, the source of his true existence, was exhausted. He was the being that had been; he was also the being that was no longer.

Now besides these rare reviviscences of a being forever vanished, others are discovered, less total but more numerous, more frequent, each one bringing to light a former sensation. Between this regained sensation and the present sensation there was established a relationship of the same

nature as that between the faith of the child and the object of his belief; and from this metaphoric relation between two impressions there has finally surged up the self; not a present self, without content, at the disposal of time and death; and not a past self, lost, and hardly retrievable; but an essential self liberated from time and contingency, a first and perpetual being, the creator of itself, the author of an "eternal song immediately recognized."

... That peculiar strain, the monotony of which—for whatever its subject it remains identical in itself—proves the permanence of the elements that compose his soul. (II, 374)

It is thus that, leaving the moment and having made an immense voyage across lost time, the existence traveling in search of its essence finds it in timelessness.

IV

The Proustian novel began with a moment *empty of all content*. It completes itself in a series of other moments as different from the first as can be, since they contain "certain impressions veritably full, those which are outside of Time." Nevertheless the quest of the novel is still not entirely accomplished. Embarked upon the search for lost time, the Proustian being has found two things: certain moments, and a kind of eternity. But he has not regained time itself. Doubtless in a certain measure he has conquered time:

... A profound idea which succeeded in enclosing within itself space and time, is not any more submitted to their tyranny and cannot perish. (*Chroniques*, p. 186)

But if, thanks to the metaphoric operation of memory, the mind has escaped the tyranny of time as well as space, the time and space that he has enclosed in this profound idea are only the time and space of a moment recaptured. A moment, it is true, of an extraordinary pro-

fusion and one which, as in Baudelaire, seems to be due to a power of infinite expansion:

An hour is not merely an hour. It is a vase filled with perfumes, sounds, plans and climates. (II, 1108)

but this vase is similar to those spoken of in the *Thousand and One Nights*, which Proust made one of his favorite readings: when one uncorks them, a genie floats out capable of condensing or dilating itself indefinitely. Each moment is one of these vases, and each moment has its distinct genie:

... The most insignificant gesture, the simplest act remain enclosed, as it were, in a thousand sealed jars, each filled with things of an absolutely different colour, odour and temperature. Furthermore, these jars, ranged along all levels of our bygone years—years during which we have been constantly changing, if only in our dreams and thoughts—stand at different altitudes and give us the impression of strangely varied atmospheres. (II, 994)

Closed vases, walling in their particular and mutually exclusive qualities, the diverse moments of time are like places in space which cannot be simultaneously traveled:

... The habit we had of never going both ways on the same day, or in the course of the same walk, but the 'Méséglise way, one time and the 'Guermantes way' another, shut them up, so to speak, far apart and unaware of each other's existence, in the sealed vessels—between which there could be no communication—of separate afternoons. (I, 104)

"Imprisoned in the cell of distinct days," regained moments are then not a true duration, but, so to speak, atoms of full time, swimming far from each other in a sort of open, empty time, a nothingness of oblivion, through which memories bore holes with their intermittent fires.

Thus nothing is more false than to compare Proustian duration to Bergsonian duration. The latter is full, the former empty; the latter is a continuity, the former a discontinuity:

... We live over our past years not in their continuous sequence, day by day, but in a memory that fastens upon the coolness or sun-parched heat of some morning or afternoon, receiving the shadow of some solitary place, enclosed, immovable, arrested, lost, remote from all others ... (I, 1003)

What we suppose to be our love, our jealousy, are, neither of them, single, continuous and individual passions. They are composed of an infinity of successive loves, of different jealousies, each of which is ephemeral, although by their uninterrupted multitude they give us the impression of continuity, the illusion of unity. (I, 285)

Nothing could be less Bergsonian than these passages. Far from being as Bergson wished it, a "*continuité mélodique*", human duration in Proust's eyes is a simple plurality of isolated moments, remote from each other. But, as Proust himself remarked, the difference in nature between these two durations necessarily entails an equal difference in the ways by which the mind must proceed to explore them. It is as an easy and gentle gliding backwards that Bergson conceives the search for lost time. Loosening itself in the course of reverie, the mind allows itself insensibly to be merged into a past whose liquid and dense substance never stops pressing in gently from all sides. For Proust, on the contrary, the exploration of the past seems at the outset so tremendously difficult of achievement that it requires nothing less than the intervention of a special grace and the maximum effort on the part of him who is the subject. Thus aided, thought must first pierce or dissipate that whole zone of dreams which is the time of the intelligence and of the

habits, chronological time, in which conventional memory disposes all that it thinks to conserve, in a rectilinear order that masks in each case its nonentity; then, having dispersed these phantoms, it must face the true nothingness, that of oblivion:

Memory ... nothingness out of which, from time to time, a similitude lets us draw, resuscitated, dead remembrances.

"Immense patches of oblivion," negative time, pure absence, place of non-being, whose sight brings vertigo, and across whose emptiness, in order to land upon some lost island, one must leap.

Time vertiginously traveled, time of a fall. Without intermediary stage, the being fallen from the present moment is in time past. Nevertheless the being that has traveled these spaces with such lightning speed has felt the depths of them:

I can measure the resistance, I can hear the echo of great spaces traversed ... (I, 35)

... resisting softness of this interposed atmosphere which has the same expanse as our life and which is the whole poetry of memory. (*Pastiches et Mélanges*, p. 108)

In discovering the strange time-mutation which in a flash it has achieved, the mind measures "the abyss of the difference in altitude." And the consciousness of this temporal distance, the contrast of epochs at once linked and separated from each other by all this emptiness, finally and especially the feeling that between them there is established something analogous to spatial perspective, all that ends by transforming this negative time, this pure non-being, into a palpable appearance, and into a dimension:

This dimension of Time ... , I would try to make continually perceptible in a transcription of human life necessarily very different from that conveyed by our deceptive senses. (II, 1121)

Thus little by little Proustian time is constructed into an entity at once spiritual and tangible, made of relations of moments which are infinitely remote from each other but which, nevertheless, in spite of their isolation and their fragmentary character, stud with their presences the depth of temporal space and render it visible by their shining multiplicity.

Already more concrete than vacant time, another form of time now appears which is constituted by the incoherent and diverse ensemble of all the moments the mind remembers. For the being who recollects himself does not discover his life in the form of a continuous thread along which one passes insensibly from the similar to the dissimilar, but on the contrary one discovers it under the aspect of a perpetual and radical dissimilarity of all the elements composing it. Life which is not a life, time which is hardly a time: "simple collection of moments," each of which occupies a particular and variable position with respect to all the others, in such a way that in this time of plurality the problem consists in constantly trying to reunite these universes, these modes of feeling and of living so mutually exclusive. Moreover, like the stars in the sky, these universes do not remain immobile, fixed in a static order, by aid of which one could construct a chronology. They disappear and reappear. Sometimes they seem monstrously remote, sometimes miraculously near. A vast, essentially erratic motion, the activity of memory, guides them along paths it is impossible for the mind to determine.

Thus time appears to the eyes of Proust as a thing of exclusions and resurrections, of fragments and spaces between fragments, of eclipses and anachronisms; a time fundamentally anarchic and, since to regain it at one point is not to regain it at another, a time

unregainable, perhaps permanently lost to the mind.

As early as the period of the *Plaisirs et les jours*, Proust had already given an expression to this feeling of spiritual powerlessness which among all our thoughts that of time makes us most painfully experience:

His only sorrow was not to be able to reach immediately all the sites which were disposed here and there, far from him, in the infinity of his own perspective. (*Les plaisirs et les jours*, p. 171)

And yet is it not with concrete time as with concrete places? If space also, at first, just as erroneously as time, is taken for a continuum whose simultaneous spread seems to be easily understandable, does it not reveal itself later on as a plurality of *aspects* which are mutually exclusive? Space then would be really only an ensemble of points of view of which each could be discovered only in its turn amidst successive perspectives. And yet does not its real signification consist in the totality of these perspectives, as in those cubist paintings in which the painter tries to give at one and the same time all those aspects of an object which one could ordinarily discover in it only by viewing it turn by turn from different angles? And is it not properly the role of time to surmount this reciprocal exclusiveness of points of view which is the property of space? The spires of Martinville, for example, appearing first in front of an immobile spectator, in the depth of an immutable perspective, grant an aspect only "episodic and momentary"; but when they find themselves engaged by the displacement of the spectator in an inverse motion, they enter, by the simple, successive changing of their lines, into an entirely different universe; a universe that is no longer one in which the three dimensions of space compose an episodic and momentary totality, but

a universe in which the fourth dimension, that of time, divests the object of all that is episodic and momentary in order to bestow *all* of its aspects upon a spectator moving at once in space and in time. Thus this sunrise perceived through the windows of a moving train:

. . . I was lamenting the loss of my strip of pink sky when I caught sight of it afresh, but red this time, in the opposite window which it left at a second bend in the line, so that I spent my time running from one window to the other to reassemble, to collect on a single canvas the intermittent antipodean fragments of my fine, scarlet, ever-changing morning, and to obtain a comprehensive view of it and a continuous picture. (I, 497)

Time, then, is like a fourth dimension which in combining with the other three perfects space, assembling altogether and providing a new canvas for those opposed fragments, enclosing in a veritable continuity a totality which otherwise would remain irremediably dispersed. Seen through the perspective of time, space is set free, transcended.

But can anything do for time what time can do for space? Is time in itself a place of non-simultaneities, of reciprocal exclusions, incapable of unification by a supra-temporal action which would allow us to possess all its successive aspects simultaneously? Are the Méséglise Way and the Guermantes Way consigned irremediably to be forever sealed in the closed vases of different afternoons?

But, as we have seen, there is such a supra-temporal action: it is the metaphoric action of memory. Between times, between "intermittent and opposite qualities", the mind is found capable of establishing those rapports which are now no longer negative rapports. Between the regained moments of its existence the mind discovers identities; it

finds in each of them a common root, its own essence. Applying this timeless presence, by means of art, to the entirety of existence, it is transported to a high place where all the temporal horizon is seen to rise tier on tier. Thus at the beginning of the novel, when the Méséglise Way and the Guermantes Way seem entirely and forever separated, a phrase of the parish priest of Combray gives presage of a day when they will be united. For from the top of the steeple, he says, "one encompasses at once things he can habitually see only one by one." This is the characteristic of metaphoric memory. It is the steeple which surmounts temporal extension, but which, in dominating it, far from abolishing it, gives it its completion. Time is truly achieved only if it is crowned by eternity. This human eternity, seized by the being in the possession of his essence, permits him retrospectively to contemplate beneath him that very time, his temporal being, formed of different levels of which each constitutes a stratum. A time which now seems to him singularly positive, an architecture. This musical architecture brings him sounds emanating from different parts of the edifice. As in the thought of Joubert, Proustian time expresses a music made of a spray of themes, each one of which remains distinct and constitutes a being, the ensemble of which is a *sum-total*: "a plenitude of music, made complete, in effect, by so many various musics, each one a being."

Time regained is time transcended.

On the one hand, then, the Proustian novel seems to be a novel without duration. A being awakens in a moment of dearth which is replaced by a moment of plenitude. Such plenitude that an immense meditation cannot suffice to exhaust its meaning. But within it, in the instant when it is accomplished, as in the *Cogito* of Descartes, everything

is contained. Everything proceeds from one instant, from one cup of tea.

On the other hand, the novel of Proust seems, in the manner of other novels, to embrace the duration of an existence. But this existence is a retrospective existence. It is not a unity advancing into the future. It is an "ulterior unity found between fragments which are simply to be joined." It is from a preliminary plurality that it gently disengages itself and always under the form of a retrograde perspective which is found behind one, when one advances in the work, so to speak, backwards. For there is not a line in the book which does not purposefully "provide the reader with an improvised memory" and produce in him the repeated and tardily meaningful memory of what he has already read. Everything is disposed under the form of recalls, so that the entire book is one immense "resonance-box".

Resonance-box in which are perceived not only the *times* of an individual existence and the *timeless* traits of a particular spirit; but where retrospectively are found also all the *times* of French thought, to its origins. For this being which awakens in a naked moment, like the being in Valéry, is going to immerse

itself in the past, in the temporal depth of which Baudelaire sang, and for which Romanticism has had such a deep longing. If in the depths it regains the primitive impression, it is, like eighteenth century thought, in order to grasp hold of itself in sensation and the instantaneous. But it cannot equate itself with sensation, and, in spite of all, its being affirms itself essentially, not as an impression, but as a consciousness perpetually creating its moments of thought. A being always recreated, always re-found and always re-lost, as the human being is in all thought since Descartes, depending also on a precarious grace, as does the human being in all religious thought, whether of the Reformation or of the Counter Reformation, the Proustian being in the final count attains to this total structure of itself which human existence had lost after the Middle Ages. Like the vast *Summae* which were erected then, all is simultaneously discovered here on the different levels which are the tiers of time. And so the work of Proust appears as a retrospective view of all French thought on time, unfolding in time, like the church of Combray, its nave.

Translated by ELLIOTT COLEMAN

EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS: AN INTRODUCTION TO ITS THEORY AND METHOD

ULRICH SONNEMANN

In the 20th century, a doctrine that has man as its topic, and expects to do him justice, is like a seafarer's ship in the 15th : it needs an open horizon and the anticipation of a distant coast. For man, while he surely exists, has become the one unknown continent amidst the many things known. With the advances of that knowledge he has grown more unknown, and much more rapidly so since the eighteen-nineties when he began in deep earnest to figure himself out. Impervious to any charges of obscurantism, the navigator, to chart his ship's course, must be ready to see in the dark, for that is when the stars are bright and sharp. Finally, the boat is a large one, if less gigantic than our present ships. It can be boarded at more than one level or deck. At this point the comparison ends and my embarrassment begins, as there are too many decks inside Existential Analysis for only one evening, and too many gang-planks lead over to them, so that it is difficult to choose.

Here is one which may get us over quickest: it is a dream that a lady of

my acquaintance had two weeks ago, a simple enough dream, but one by which some fundamental points can be exemplified. It was that she extended her hand to her cat, that it was torn to shreds in the process of the cat's playing with it, but that she nevertheless had to keep it extended until her own cries awakened her. What do you make of such an experience? Almost with some violence we remember—only to reject it at once—a certain nineteenth century theory (meritoriously buried by Freud) according to which the dream means nothing at all, or at most, perhaps an uncomfortable position of the hand. I am purposely referring to this theory because the rationale of existential analysis, the phenomenological rationale, is simpler and at the same time stricter than the Freudian in rejecting it. The existential critique cannot but hit Freud's own understanding of such phenomena as those of dreams.

To deny meaning to any past experience which held meaning when it was a present one—that is, when the dreamer dreamt it—removes the only criterion of *any meaning* discoverable, for what is important here is the experience of it, which is always the present, never the past, of a phenomenal content. This denial leads to the conclusion that any present experience can be considered meaningless once it has become a past experience. And the very thought which thinks that this past experience has been meaningless, or thinks that it meant something else than it did mean, must itself be included in that very same hypothesizing, because this hypothesis, the thought experience, will also be

Doctor Sonnemann presented this article as a lecture to the Post-Graduate School of Psychiatry in New York this winter. A more fully developed presentation of its central insights is contained in his recent book, EXISTENCE AND THERAPY (Grune and Stratton). The latter, subtitled "an introduction to phenomenological psychology and existential analysis", is a valuable introduction to important new trends in European psychiatry exemplified in the work of men like Viktor Frankl, Melard Boss, and Ludwig Binswanger.

a past experience later. Does the dream, then, still mean what it meant to the dreamer while dreaming it, no more and no less? We answer with an unequivocal "yes", although we realize that the very term "meaning" seems equivocal at this point, for there was no actual cat, and the mere occurrence that was dreamed, the dream severed from its experiential background in the dreamer and presented to us as a quasi-fact, does not contain its own meaning in the form of any theoretical account. We have to proceed more slowly then, and see what can be done. The dream can be explained, or an attempt at an explanation made.

In nine out of ten such attempts today the explanation will involve the dreamer's motivation. Just as the "remotest" theory in physics—remote in the sense of unphenomenal—must in the end still account for the phenomena that the theory is supposed to cover, so whatever theory we arrive at must in the end still be true to the phenomena at hand. Now by that standard, combining with it the standard already achieved (according to which, when it comes to those data called experiences, it is the presence of their contents that is alone *given*) we see at once that motivation can account only for what the dreamer *does* in her dream, not for what happens *to* her. The argument that the cat and what it does is not actual and therefore in a sense the product of her own psyche, her motivation, is invalid. For we do not derive that knowledge from the dream itself, which on the contrary has the cat and what it does as highly real. Therefore we have to suspend that knowledge, just as a physicist must suspend such everyday notions as the compactness of matter in closing in on his data. Although the dreamer's motives alone cannot account for the dream, what can we say about these

motives? What explanation can be given in terms of them?

Some will try to explain the dream by the dreamer's masochism. This can mean two things which in clinical literature are seldom kept apart. It can mean, as it usually will, that there is supposed to be a factor, an entity, an agent: masochism. But this factor is only a verbal shadow. It is an abstraction, and not an explanatory one. It is not in the least comparable with the abstractions of physics, for that from which it is abstracted is not itself an observation of any lawful relations, but a behavioral and experiential symptom picture. What the dreamer does in her dream is an essential element of this symptom picture. Consequently masochism, if not intended as a classification (which it is), cannot be an explanation, since this would be to explain a datum by itself.

Or the explanation involving masochism may refer to any of the known (e.g. psychoanalytic) theories of masochism; it may refer to Thanatos. It could easily be shown that the theory of the death drive is not one of those things the vindication or disproof of which can be seen as a matter of time, as though a not-yet were involved. On the contrary it is, like many psychoanalytic theories, set forth in such a way that neither its proof nor its disproof is even conceivable according to its own constitution as a concept. This leaves us with less far-reaching explanatory attempts. The dreamer's behavior in her dream, her masochism, may be referred to as a castration complex, directly or via intermediaries. In either case, the hand ultimately becomes a substitute for something else.

But why should it, in the first place? The explanation our friend received from her analyst implied the castration complex (and she understands that theory quite well), but it did not help

her to understand the dream. Yet that dream, so much she remembered, had a message of great practical importance, which she tried hard to find, though she did not have a chance since she misunderstood even what *finding* means in such a case. It is now generally understood as a kind of decoding of the dream. Actually, it is a remembering, a reliving of the presence of what did occur the way it occurred. But now it is joined with the full and free orientation of the waking state, and this is the first opportunity for its conceptual penetration, for thought.

Freud's entire dream theory takes off from his assumption and his conviction that the dream, like so many manifestations of the psyche which he personally could not identify with or not understand in their immediacy, is irrational. This means that in their literalness dreams made no sense to him. Without this premise there is no good primary reason to regard the hand as a genital substitute, so that it is basically a question of the solidity of the premise. Let us see. A substitute is something that has no being of its own; it is a reference to something else. This is manifestly untrue of a hand, for it is the instrument of all world-directed action, a peculiarly human thing, as elemental and as important to our existence as any body organ. Moreover, it does not do anything in the dream but passively extend itself, as the dreamer distinctly recalls. With that fact there falls not only the basis for the castration theory explanation via a certain intermediary (which still would be an *action* of the hand), but at the same time the full truth of the dream appears. For this tentative, so to speak, extending of the hand, this passivity of hand-initiative which turns the instrument of action into its own opposite,

a helpless object, happens to be the literal statement of the essence of the dreamer's biography to date, as she herself immediately understood once it was stated.

But an object always is an object to *somebody*. In relation to the person's inner life history, to use Binswanger's term, that somebody is life itself: life understood as a wonderful but alien power, tremendously attractive and tremendously terrible, that very primeval life in which man's hand has cut no path as yet: in one word, the jungle. The dream states precisely the same thing, only more concretely (which here as always means according to essence: a cat). Of course the cat is a symbol. But a symbol is not a substitute, unless we re-define that word positivistically in which case the cat is not a symbol but just a cat; nor is a symbol an allegory, as our present colloquial use of the term symbol signifies and as Freud himself believed. It does not stand for something else but is being stood for by whatever it is said to symbolize, in this instance the jungle. Whether it occurs in dreams, in the myths, in true poetry and art, the symbol is always spontaneous, always the immediate concrete presence to man of a modus of being, an essence. It is never a deliberate manipulation of so-called allegorical meanings, never an abstraction. On the contrary, *we* have to put abstractions in its place to circumscribe it and thereby convey it theoretically, as I did. The art of our time, the surrealists and magic realists, has rediscovered that essences are the opposite of anything abstract, that essences and not objects, which themselves are abstract, are what we mean by *real* originally. This is also true of the thought of our time, with the existentialists from Heidegger, Jaspers, the earlier Sartre, and Marcel, to Binswanger and Boss, Heidegger's followers in psychiatry. It is also true

of man in our time, for all who can master enough spontaneity to break through the veil between their own essential selves and the reality of all essences. For that veil itself is an abstraction, the first and most fundamental abstraction of all, in a word, the ego.

This is a very different account of the ego from the one you have grown most used to, for according to that other one the ego is on the contrary the negotiator, the bridge, between the psyche and reality. It is likely, then, that in the two accounts not just one, but every single category is understood differently, as is indeed the case. We saw that reality is not merely the gamut of facts around us as Freud thought. The immediately visible reasons for this are threefold.

In the first place, reality is presence, whereas facts, seen as just that, are the past, which in the best case dies this very moment. Your presence in this city has been a fact all along which you took for granted. If you now think of it you see yourself in the city, and what you see is the up-to-this-moment, that is, the past. If you visualize yourself in the city at noon tomorrow you have to fix your attention on an image of your past self which you project so to speak onto an abstract tomorrow. On the other hand if that tomorrow becomes eidetically concrete to you because you know what you want and look forward to it, your presence in the city tomorrow now ceases to be factual or rather projectively factual. It turns into a presence or rather a coming-to-be-present which is not your own self-presence to yourself as seen by you through the eyes of others, but the coming-to-be-present to *you* of others—your patient, your girl friend: whatever lies ahead and is therefore an open future with both its uncertainties and its directing power—and nothing factual. It is this openness of the future—*Zukunft*: that which is coming toward—which underlies, as you

may never have realized, your entire immediate notion of reality. That this is so was shown first by Jaspers who found that experiences of reality-loss in his schizophrenics never involved any misperceptions or misjudgments of facts. On the contrary facts are seen with special and often unbearable sharpness by these patients. But it is only since Heidegger's phenomenology of time and fundamental ontology of the temporality of existence, which I just applied, that we can also understand it.

The second reason why reality is not the gamut of facts is that we cannot ever turn an "is" into an "ought", yet it is when we are most in contact with reality that we derive our surest oughts from that contact. This brings us to the third reason, which is that if reality were indeed the gamut of mere facts, our reality experience would have to answer the sole criteria of first consummation of, and secondly protection from, things. It would have to lie wholly within the dimension of pleasure versus pain, which dimension indeed, and with great theoretical consequence, underlies the control functions of the ego in the psychoanalytic account. But it is just this account which is belied by the phenomena.

Let us take a simple experience such as joy, which phenomenally may overlap with pleasure but has a totally different centering as well as experiential structure. It is missing from Freud's account of the human person; I mean it is missing as what it is. We may hear of sublimations of libidinal energy; this is a quantitative determination as are in principle all of his criteria. But what is the primary empirical criterion, then, for accepting, inconsistently, some phenomena as what they are, while not accepting others except as sublimations, substitutions, displacements, and so forth? There was, in Freud, a profound

and a *a priori* conviction, essentially puritan, concerning the elementary position of the sensual within the psyche, of the animal underneath, an animal which is very unlike true animals and may be said to be the greatest shadow that the myth of the 19th century had cast upon his thought. What it means is that he had experienced this elementary quality of the sensual, while remaining unaware of the even more elementary quality of such experiences as joy.

Joy phenomenally implies the reality of the spirit, its presence in and to the person; but what is this spirit? Is it really only a word? Almost anyone who has heard Bach's Brandenburg Concertos knows what it means as a word and how real that is which it does connote. Yet what it connotes is non-existent in the psychological nomenclature of our day. The spirit does not figure in Freud's theory except in a denaturalized, debunked conception of its place in the psyche. But it not only plays a part, it is overwhelmingly present in such fields of human interest and action as music, to which, as we know from his biographer, Freud had no access at all; the source of his theoretical convictions in his own world experience here lies open at a glance.

Man, precariously held in balance by the unconscious controls of his super-ego, the conscious checkings of his ego, man the animal, is man the unspon-taneous. But what peculiar animal is that? Animals, like children, are spontaneous. They act *into* their world; they *are* their own bodies, as man is too, in one modus of his being. They are not concerned, confronted, subject to object, with themselves as their bodies, or with their body orifices any more than with their psyches. Now what animal, or to use Binswanger's term, *homo natura*, is man according to psychoanalysis? It must be one in which the power of spontaneity is hemmed in, or to some

extent broken, from the start. We know from common experience that the inner attitude which can do that to spontaneity is self-conscious reflection; not a reflection of the images and ideas which are our inner environment and thus partake in the non-self, but a reflection of that which is at the same time doing the reflecting, that is of the self, which in this way is turned into its own object, away from its world.

Yet there is no self without a world, inner and outer. If its attention is turned away from its world, it must cease to *be* itself. For these two, self and world, psyche and reality, are but theoretical polar abstractions from an authentic unit which is our being-in-the-world; in Heidegger's terminology, our being in-and-with our existence. The self-alienated self, the self objectified and abstracted, the self turned shadow, is the phenomenal ego. It is this phenomenal ego, which is the object of self-consciousness, the existence-content of all neuroses, and the principal condition of the seeming plausibility of the psychoanalytic account. The subject-object split, which is Freud's Cartesian inheritance, is manifest already in his presentation of the mechanism. For example, stirrings which the ego cannot tolerate are projected outward, but before they are projected outward they are perceived. Man's relation to them begins with their perception, which means that he is already disidentified *from* them; otherwise he would be one with them and would perceive, as he actually does, not them, but their goals and objectives.

There is an ego, then, in psychological objectivism, but it is significant that there is not a thou, for the world as facts is one thing, the world as challenge and response (inter-subjectivity, in Marcel's term), quite another and more

real world. But to the extent to which ego-reflectivity has split the original self-world unit, to that extent will any ego-reflective theory of what is supposed to be the lawful relations between the two be a source of relief to the patient. No longer is he alone between the facts behind and the shadow of self in front of him. And the call of his conscience, that peculiarly telling silence within which challenges him with its exclusive message to dare to be who he is, becomes inaudible. It, too, is debunked; it, too, is turned into one of those many nothing-buts, even if quite a basic one among them.

It is not my purpose to belittle the merits of psychoanalysis which not only has opened many alleys of theoretical inquiry bound to lead beyond it, but in fact is bound to be helpful as a treatment method with a certain type or types of personalities common in our society, itself so lacking in spontaneity; in dedication to the non-self. It is my purpose to bring into as sharp a focus as possible the theoretical and practical situation against which, in psychopathology, the existentialist attack in Europe directed itself from the start. Reflections of a less radical nature, lying already on the way to it, occurred within the orbit of psychoanalytic theory itself and led to the many breaks with Freud from Jung to Fromm. What none of them broke through to was a disclosure, a bracketing-out, of the actual phenomenal content of such bracketing-in conceptions as Jung's psychic realities, or Horney's humanistic culture, or Fromm's spontaneity.

These are understood as intrasubjective and in Horney's case intrasocietal factors. However, according to the phenomenal structure of the contents of the experiences meant, these contents lie beyond the subject or subjects; they are realities *to* them. Only by their being realities can they serve the sub-

jects as orientation and inspiration, can they rally and direct their selves and make them real as persons, as societies, with new biographic and historical realities. Only then and in this way do they become the facts of Horney's "culture".

This beyond-the-self is misunderstood by psychological objectivism as a kind of production, projection, output, of the psyche. It is as if a near-sighted magpie, unable to see the moon directly, should sit at the edge of a puddle trying to catch the silver in the puddle which is no silver at all but the reflection of the moon; positivistically, the bird might decide that the puddle is projecting. It is evident that the error of which I am speaking is bound to occur as a consequence of *any* attempt at turning the psyche, the referent of all objects insofar as they are objects, into an object itself. We do not have to restrict this to any particularly lofty phenomenal contents, such as an experienced nearness or remoteness of God. Any ordinary feeling which is supposed to be an intra-psychic event, as though the psyche were a closed, spatially extended, quasi-material system (as Freud understood it) is, phenomenally, the presence to the person of that which is felt; as in grief, that which is felt, now, is the meaning of the death of a loved one. This meaning reflects itself in the psyche as the moon does in the puddle; but the comparison with the puddle ends at this point, for the puddle is also an object in itself, whereas the psyche is not. Its whole being is a being toward; not a single psychic event, not a single experience, can be named which is not a reference beyond that which experiences. Consequently, all comparisons of the psyche with objects, with factual orders extended in physical time-space, are unempirical and therefore are false. The psyche, as nothing

else, is constituted from the start as a reference beyond itself.

Self-transcendancy, then, is not a speculation of metaphysicians; it is itself the first fact that true psychological empiricalness can make out. Therefore empiricalness is now everywhere at odds with empiricism as an ideology, with that empiricism which is itself an unwitting metaphysical belief, more destructive than any because it does not even know itself as one. The task of psychology is exploration of the immediate data or rather contents of experience, phenomenology. But this task is of the greatest practical significance clinically, because it is in psychiatry, in clinical psychology, that phenomenal contents are at the same time that which is most puzzling to the clinician and yet precisely that which he has least explored thus far.

If, as we have seen, a feeling is actually a world reference, a noetic event, a conviction, can we afford to neglect these most fundamental convictions, these world designs (in Heidegger's phrase) of our patients, which are so firmly rooted that, in one sense of knowing, the patients do not know that they possess them, yet which not only are the common if tacit referents of all their experiences and actions but in which they will recognize themselves immediately once these conviction, these world designs, are stated to them? A world design, since world itself means a toward-the-existent, is no cosmological theory, though it can take the form of one along with many other forms. Always, as we saw when presenting the dream of our friend earlier in this lecture, it implies the position of the subject in and to the world as well, and it always implies specific modes of space and time experience, which obviously are very fundamental to each individual existence and yet are entirely absent from the scope of the psychoanalytic

inquiry. The area on which such a world design centers, and this means the major centering of the person's fundamental interest and attention, can be the spheres of his relations to his own body, or to others, or, finally, to the absolute, the cosmos. In any case, from the start it involves the non-self as much as the self. Its topic is ultimately neither of the two in isolation but their relationship as a primal, irreducible unity. In this way every existence can be understood, as Heidegger understands it, as a manifestation, into and within the horizon of time, of an idea, an essence in its timelessness, a possible modus of being.

An idea in this original connotation is not an abstraction but an image; a design on the part of being itself; a "throw". Being is that which brings forth, unfolds; factual is that which is, that which now and always is encountered as brought forth and unfolded. To find a bridge between this thinking and modern biology, I may refer you to the studies of Portmann. The impossibility of ever accounting for any body forms of animals and plants on a purely functional basis, without recourse to their physiognomic essence, which can only be grasped eidetically, is magnificently demonstrated there. For our present purpose, it would be more important to trace the specific differences between Binswanger's thinking, which centers itself on love as the climax of spontaneity and self-transcendence in man, and Heidegger's which centers itself on the phenomena of care and of dread. But that is beyond the scope of this paper. Nor do I have the space to point out the differences between the existential-analytic doctrines of Binswanger and of Boss, and between both of them and the so-called logotherapy of Frankl.

We began with a dream and its phenomenological inspection. It is clear

now that a dream, being already phenomenally characterized by its *revealingness* belies any attempt at reading something so to speak behind it, any allegorization of its content. It must be understood on its own, not the rationalist's terms, but once it is understood on its own terms, we will find that any dream is a faithful, even literal, charting of the actual inner biographic situation of the dreamer, which is far more than the situation of his wishing.

Central to that inner biographic situation is the person's world design; and the dream, of course, constitutes only one among many points of entry to the enduring idea for which it stands. This idea, design, conviction, offers no primarily *genetic* problem; what is important about it is what is important about any idea or conviction: its claim to truth. Accordingly, it is only in terms of the truth of that conviction, never with regard to its actual or hypothetical motivation, that the ideas of the patient will be discussed in his *Daseinsanalyse*. The nineteenth century with its determinism and functionalism, and its biological reductionism, very definitely ends here. When the patient says something the question asked is not why he says this but is this true, or how true is it, or where in it is that truth which he must be seeing to say this. It is never a question of his objectified psychological self. On the contrary in many instances we will have to draw his attention away from that. It is the *truth* of his ideas, the *worthiness* of his goals, the *merits* of his actions and action-designs that form the topics of our interpretations and exchanges.

Yet in this manner we only chart the territory in front of us, because the essential conviction on which the patient's whole condition may hinge is not so easily revealed. The reason for this is not that it is remote from his thinking but that it is too close, too central

to his thinking, to allow of its conceptual focalization very readily. Even if we state it to him it may first only be echoed by his intellect operating in an isolation from his being that is itself a characteristic of some forms of neurosis. Everything will depend then on finding a way by which the open horizon of Truth, that the conviction in its present form may be blocking, can be opened up again. But perhaps now or in the past this conviction itself partakes in Truth? It is evident that we have only scratched the surface of the actual problems of *Daseinsanalyse*. To go deeper would involve us in the hermeneutics of Truth, in what Truth means phenomenally. This must be done before the age-old and thoughtless discussion about its absoluteness or relativity, a discussion consisting only of misunderstandings, can get under way. It is obvious that I cannot do this tonight, but I may refer once more to the dream that was cited. A purely intellectual insight of the patient, as I had stated, will not free him from the untruth in which his existence as a whole may be caught.

But a dream is not only an intellectual, in the sense of abstract-theoretical, experience: it engages his whole being. Consequently, understanding his dream in the light of its own truth, now stated conceptually, can mean an enormous liberation, the beginning of a breakthrough, an unblocking. This implies that we must try to expose our patients to all such experiences, in their waking-life as well. By engaging them as whole beings these experiences can make the horizon of existential truth visible to them beyond what has long blocked off their vision. This in turn means, in many instances, that existential analysis will be what might be called a highly directive treatment method. For example if we find in a neurotic patient's inner order of experiences that the

more-than-one partner or group, the open society, is the locus of threats to him, that he has many different friends and perhaps belongs to cliques, sects and the like, but never brings them together, we know that his dimension of central interests, preoccupations and spontaneous ideas will fluctuate between the dread and the mastery of his own situation in public. We may then persuade him to give a very informal party or reception, and perhaps many such parties and receptions from then on. This will bring embarrassments to him in the beginning, but for the first time he will understand them instantaneously, and of itself that is to rise above them. The reason for this is that the dread, when for the first time it is not fled from but faced, must turn into what it has always been ready to become: a hope and a challenge inhering, as its hidden potentiality, in that very same situation habitually so painful just because that hope and that challenge in it had never been confronted. If we only can persuade the patient to keep up for a while his exposures to the public, the once threatening idea must lose its terror. Not only that, a power is gained that in a sense the person always knew belonged to him. It is like a somewhat theoretical right, an unredeemable title, never actually possessed or made use of. To escape the injustice of such a situation, what could he do, but question even that he *had* that right? We see a paradigm here for the essence of all neurosis. The neurotic has won in the lottery; but he cannot find his ticket. He has written down the number of the ticket. But it may be that he wrote it down wrong.

What the neurotic lacks, then, is faith. Among the many phenomena of self-transcendence in man, of self-transcendence as the condition of his well-being at least as much as of his well-doing, faith is empirically the most

decisive and most telling—but what is it? In any case, it involves the beholding of a radical beyond-the-self. This may be a beyond-the-fact-world, as in all spiritualistic philosophies and many religions, or as in Heidegger's teaching, a characteristic of that peculiar being-in of man, of his being *in* the world, which in substance means his freedom. As Planck had seen quite clearly, and as radical reflection, existentialist reflection, can clarify further, freedom is not restricted, let alone belied, by any deterministic laws, because deterministic laws apply a priori to beings insofar as they are objects; they never apply to any being in its authentic self-identity.

Since at the same time freedom is seen by Heidegger as the essence of truth, and this in turn (as last before to Heraclitos) is the openness of being, its clarifying and coming to itself, which is a privilege of man, freedom itself is never willfulness or arbitrariness, but is that openness of mind which allows of its partaking in Truth. This means that faith, as the utmost of self-transcendence and of applied freedom—contrary to a now current misunderstanding of a tenet of Kierkegaard—can never be a willful silencing of any skepticism within, and even less can it be a deliberate act of self-therapy that one tries to impose upon himself just because he finds that faith seems to make others so happy. For this does not give him faith; it is not the way for a conviction to come about; it can only make him more untrue to himself than he has already been. To the religious person, to any one inspired, this is nothing new of course, and never has been; it is the pragmatist as well as some Jungians, to whom it can hardly be sufficiently stressed. The psychotherapist, it is true, must open his eyes to the overpowering reality of the divine, of the spirit, in man, to that in man which is constantly searching for meaning.

He must encourage what faith there is or is trying to be; he must encourage everything in his patients that shows itself receptive for any spontaneous manifestations of that power which the spirit is. But he is not its protagonist or delegate, and must always be aware of this. For any such usurpations can only work against that openness of the inner horizon in his patient of which I spoke; will either violate the patient's freedom or shatter his trust; only prejudice and perhaps cripple whatever, at some future time, might otherwise still turn up as an authentic truth of his being.

This stress on authenticity as an unconditional and unmitigated personal truth, on truth as first of all a quality of living, is a distinguishing mark of existentialist thought. In the face of a social and intellectual world crowded with mechanical determinations, existentialism insists that these determinations and these objectifications cannot meaningfully extend to their own agent, man. We do not deny, though we find his theoretical account of them unsatisfactory, that Freud's mechanisms exist; we hold that not they but what persists and maintains itself against them, namely his freedom, is the essence of man. This his freedom, then, is the human spirit. The spirit is not just another force or agent, just another item subject to quantitative determinations, within the world of everything-that-is, as Heidegger puts it, but *is being*. We are wary of any uncompelling, unobliging formulas that explain an integrated human living by a vague "belief in life", such as I heard at the end of an otherwise rewarding lecture last winter given by the psychoanalyst who had rediscovered spontaneity. We know the decisive importance of a full self-transcendence in all integrated living of man; we know that life, just to integrate itself in him,

calls for a radically different, a *polar* principle. But we are at least as wary of any proselytizing, any mere preachings of the spirit, of any propaganda that points out that contemporary man must balance what usually is called his materialism with more of an orientation to the sphere of the spiritual. For this view itself is unspirited, is objectivistic—for according to it man is still considered to be a machine that needs greasing, and what it means by the spirit is not the spirit at all, which is unobjectifiable, always authentic, always spontaneous, but just the grease.

We will not examine which of the currently fashionable schools within psychotherapy most seem to call for the criticism and the warning that I just formulated. Nor can we take up innumerable matters important to my subject, such as the psychotherapy of psychotics which is Binswanger's main interest, or the problems of transference, or a more detailed rationale of the phenomenological method, or its evolution by and after Husserl, or the phenomenological critique of Gestalt psychology, or the differences between the various existentialist doctrines. Nor can we go into those sections of Heidegger's fundamental ontology that explore the phenomenon of nothingness which is the experiential content of all dread and thus incisive for any understanding of the clinical forms of anxiety with which we deal. But I hope that I have succeeded in giving you at least an inkling of the vastness both of the theoretical structure or structures now growing in Europe preliminary to a future science of man and of the gulf that separates them from objectivism. The most customary and seemingly self-evident notions are revised and often reversed on the other side of that gulf. If bridging it is to be at all successful, it is these most axiomatic and usually most unexamined notions—such as reali-

ty, or symbolism, or consciousness, or the ego—that must first of all be rethought. As we say, they must be thought back to their common sources of understanding in us, which is something very different from the mechanically connotative concept definitions of the so-called General Semantics.

Returning once more to psychotherapy as a practice, the first change existential analysis calls for is a change in attitude: the patient is not our natural-scientific object but our partner and communicant. His problems, *the way they occur to him*, must be our problems, and that particular form of contemporary human self-abasement called specialism notwithstanding, we find that all decisive questions that come up in

the theory and practice of psychotherapy are in the last analysis philosophical questions. Evading the philosophical issues in practice is bound to mean prejudicing them without even knowing that one does so in many cases, evading these issues, which the patient's experience of his own situation at once hides and discloses, means in practice less sincerity toward him than you will wish to inhere in your treatments. In theory it means that the very insistence on being empirical, on being empirical according to the prescriptions of an empiricistic ideology, leads farthest away from that radical empiricalness, that unreservedly open readiness for experience, observation, and thought on which all science hinges.

LAY, THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY, LAYMEN'S WORK

(A LEXICOGRAPHICAL STUDY)

HANS HERMANN WALZ

"Lay (man)" appears in the European vernaculars during the 12th and 13th centuries as a term borrowed from the Latin *laicus*. This is derived from the Greek λαϊκός which is an adjectival form, also used as a noun, of the root λαός (Attic λέως). It means, speaking very generally, "pertaining to the λαός." The etymological origin of λαός is not clear. At all events, it designates the people not in the sense of a political body (δῆμος, *populus*), nor in the sense of a tribal or national unit (ἔθνος *gens*) but for the most part in the sense of: multitude, people, mass. The amorphous multiplicity of human beings first and foremost implied in this concept is determined by that to which it is opposed and related. Thus *laos* in relation to a country means the population, in relation to a prince his subjects, in relation to a military leader the army, in relation to a priest the worshippers. This capacity of the word for remaining open to definition from outside and above has made possible its remarkable use in the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. There it is

used in relation to God and usually means the people of God *par excellence*, i. e. Israel, the people of Jahweh chosen out of "the peoples," membership of which is a privilege and carries with it a special obligation. It is in this sense that the word is used in the New Testament where, however, it takes on the meaning of the "new people of God" composed of Jews and Gentiles. *Laikos* does not occur in the New Testament; if it did occur, however, it would logically have to mean "pertaining to the community chosen in Christ." It may be assumed that this idea is present as an undertone in the words λαός and *laicus* wherever they occur in early Christian writings. There is, however, no adequate foundation for the claim made by Dom Gregory Dix (*Apostolic Ministry*, London 1946, p. 283) that this was the sole or even dominant meaning during the first three centuries of Christian history.

Already in the Old and New Testaments λαϊκός is often used in the general sense of crowd, people (in particular in the Lukan writings) and not infrequently in contrast to superiors, such as the Sanhedrin, Pilate, etc. In this connection a passage such as Jer. 34, 19, where the priests too are contrasted with the *laos*, is of particular significance. It is in accordance with such Old Testament passages that Clement of Rome (about 100 A.D.) already uses the term "laity" as opposed to priests.

In later Christian literature the use of the term for the worshipping community as distinct from the priests has more and more come to hold the field. As early as Justin Martyr (about 150

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A.D.) occurs the statement which, for the succeeding centuries and down to our time, has remained a norm for the position of the "laity" in the Church: the *laos*, at the end of each prayer, confirms the words spoken (by the leaders of the congregation) through its Amen. In fact, the word *laicus* (layman) is from the beginning used almost exclusively in contrast to the *clericus*, the officiant, or the priest, or, with a different nuance, to the *homo religiosus*, the monk. (Cf. for the above and in general, the presentation by P. Yves M.-J. Congar *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc*, Paris 1953, which is illuminating both historically and systematically.) Gradually the line of demarcation was so sharply drawn that Gratian (d. 1160) was able to say: *duo sunt genera Christianorum*, referring to the clergy and the laity (see Congar *op. cit.* p. 27). Stephen, Bishop of Tournai (d. 1203), speaks in the same sense of *duo populi*, to which *duae vitae*, *duo principatus* and a *duplex iurisdictionis ordo* correspond (Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des Römischen Katholizismus*, 5th ed., 1934, No. 318). In the 14th and 15th centuries the laity and the clergy are even referred to as two separate bodies. The clergy are regarded not only as different from the laity but as constituting the superior element in the Church. Thus e. g. there existed, before the Council of Trent which established the *character indelebilis* in its final form, a punitive *reductio in communionem laicam* for priests (evidence for this is found as early as Cyprian, d. 258). Furthermore, this separation early appears in worship, where the priests sat or stood in the apse, the laity remaining in the nave, or body of the church. In accordance with the original meaning of *κληρος* (lot, inheritance), the clergy are referred to either as those who are the special portion of God and who possess

in particular God as their inheritance (Ps. 16, 5) or as those who have been singled out from the *laos* by lot (understood as the voice of God) and called to a higher vocation. This meaning of the word *clerus* and the evaluation of the status of the laity which is inseparable from it, finds its echo up to the present time in the formula of ordination even in many so-called Free Churches, where the ordinand is separated from the rest of the congregation as one "set apart."

The Reformation brought a change, inasmuch as it proclaimed anew the biblical and early church doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and drew the conclusion that every member of the Church as such possessed all spiritual authority and that therefore there was no valid ground for the existence of a specially consecrated clergy. In his treatise "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" (1520; for Luther's aim in writing this treatise see his letter to Amsdorf of 23.6.1520: "Whether God wills to help His Church through the laity") Luther emphasises, with regard to the late medieval theories, that "Christ does not have two bodies or two different kinds of body, one temporal and one spiritual" (WA VI 408). However, the conduct of the public worship of the community should, in the interest of needful order, be carried out by persons who, on account of their peculiar gifts, have been called by a special procedure to this function. "Whoever has undergone baptism may boast that he is already consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although it is not meet for everyone to exercise such ministries. For, although we all alike are priests, nobody may put himself forward and attempt, without our permission and decision, to do what we all have equal power to do. For that which is common to all, nobody may take for himself without the will and the injunction of the community."

(Luther, *op. cit.*) Nevertheless the Protestant Churches too have become to a large extent clericalised. The pastor, although not necessarily separated from the "laity" by a special consecration, is set apart all the more on account of his theological knowledge and his particular position in the social structure. If, in the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, the layman is the unordained person, he is, in the Protestant Churches of Europe, largely identified as the person who has not been theologically trained. It is from this fact that there has developed the secularised conception of the layman, in the sense of the man who lacks technical competence in a given field, whilst the Catholic opposition between clergy and laity has led to the term "laïcisme." The term "laïc" in France is identified with "religiously neutral" or "without religion."

Just as the Middle Ages saw the rise of certain movements directed against the religious monopoly of the priest, since the Reformation several movements have been directed against the rule or the exclusive ministry of the theologically trained expert, e. g. the pietistic and the missionary movements, also in certain cases liberalism, and movements in favour of "democracy in the Church." Here and there these have led to the formation of independent church communities (Methodists, Congregationalists, Quakers, etc.). Not always but in many cases the differences between "clerics" and "lay members," from the point of view both of doctrinal definition and of social status, are completely levelled out in these "free churches." In their place, however, there develops a new distinction, that between church officers and ordinary members of the Church. Laymen are now those church members who are not officially engaged in the church organisation. In this sense a parish worker,

an organist, a youth leader or an official legal adviser would not be classified as a layman. This distinction, which is no longer theological or social but very clearly sociological, applies even where the word "lay" itself has been erased from the vocabulary of a church community because of its traditional doctrinal connotations.

From all this it becomes clear that the "lay issue" is implicitly a question as to the nature and structure of the Church itself. At all events, a solution cannot be found by declaring either that there are in principle no laymen in the Church, or that all members of the Church are laymen because they belong to the people of God. This affirmation is no better than doctrinaire when, for the sake of a theory which on certain premises is theologically correct, the real state of the case is overlooked. This is that 99% of church members in their relationship to the organised Church are in a different position from that of the few who not only live out their Christian vocation in the service of the organised Church but very often earn their living through it. The fact that by far the greatest number of church members have to spend their lives "in the world" cannot be without relevance to the understanding of the Church, its nature and its relation to this world.

From this arises the modern demand for a theology of the laity. The position of the laity, which so far has nearly always been defined negatively, is to be seen positively as an essential aspect of the nature of the Church itself. The Church lives in the world, and the layman embodies to an impressive degree the solidarity of the Church and the Church's ministry with man and with the orders of this world. In so far as laymen, as members of the Church, are dispersed everywhere in the world, in all nations, in all realms of life, in all professions, they are witnesses

to the presence of Christ in the world. The "gathered community," which is so often considered an essential characteristic of the Church, is basically an eschatological anticipation. The manner in which Christ is present which is typical for the age between the resurrection and the parousia is His presence in the diaspora, the dispersion of the Church. "Ye are the salt of the earth" (Matth. 5, 13)—without dispersion no savour. It must be remembered that it is the earth of which Christ speaks here. Gustave Thils has begun to work out a theology of the laity under the title *Théologie des réalités terrestres*. The presence of Christ witnessed to by the laity as the dispersed Church means the Lordship of Christ over all realms of life, and at the same time the hiddenness of this Lordship. Thus the laity ultimately represent the Church inasmuch as they are concerned with transient things which point to eternal things.

A theology of the laity is therefore not a theology for the use of the "non-experts" in the Church, but a theology which works out these aspects of the divine act of redemption. There is first the question of the relation of the Word of God to those earthly things and to those spheres of activity in which laymen in particular live their lives. Secondly, there is the question of the way in which Christians ought to behave in these spheres, e. g. politics, economics, culture, etc. Thirdly, there is the question of the proclamation and spreading of the Gospel through those who, together with the majority of mankind, share man's destiny of work under the conditions of the modern working world. Finally, there is the question of equipping the laity for their ministry in the world and at the same time working out the right form of the Church's life and of the various minis-

tries and services in the Christian community.

These concerns are taken up by those forces within the Church which are today usually covered by the term "laymen's work." Laymen's work is not the activity of a specific organisation, but one aspect of the renewal of the Church. What has to be aimed at is a right understanding on the part of the Church of its responsibility in the world, and at the same time a right understanding of its own inner being. Answers have to be found to urgent questions regarding the constitution and form of the individual parish congregation, regarding missionary effort and evangelistic work, and regarding the kind of training appropriate to ordained ministers and lay folk in the modern world. A new understanding must be reached of the cure of souls as that spiritual companionship which goes with a man in the ways of his life in the world, and of religious instruction as the equipment of older and younger Christians for Christian living in this world.

Only if it has become clear that the concern of the laymen's movement extends to the message and the life of the Church as a whole, is it useful to point to the organised experiments which are being carried out with a view to making progress in this direction. There is first of all the indispensable study undertaken in church committees, independent study groups, and university institutes (such as the Sociological Institute of the Dutch Reformed Church in Utrecht) by way of investigating certain sectors of contemporary life and attempting to see them in the light of the Gospel. Secondly, there are meeting places such as Evangelical Academies and similar institutions and groups, in Germany and the Netherlands, in America and India. Groups such as the *Associations Professionnelles Protestantes* in France or the Christian Frontier

Council in London belong to this category. All these forms of "meeting" have two concerns: creation of fellowship among the dispersed (Melancthon describes the Church itself as the *coëtus dispersorum*), and a vital spiritual encounter with the world to grapple with the problems of the world. Thirdly, there are training centres and courses organised in the form of evening classes, week-end courses or full-time training for laymen in general, or for special professions such as workers, farmers, students, etc. Fourthly, there are work communities (at times also called "cells") in which Christians and non-Christians meet on the basis of their common work, e. g. the university, a factory, a professional association. These four types resemble one another in that they are not organisations in the technical sense and that they are not based on the principle of membership—even though in some cases there does exist a core of leaders living as a lay order. In this they differ from the laymen's work which, on a denominational or interdenominational level, is carried out by organised associations. A further common feature of these four categories is the fact that, although they come within the framework of the Church and are in many cases closely related to a particular church authority, the focus of their work is outside the life

of the traditional parish (cf. Eberhard Müller, *Die Welt ist anders geworden*, Hamburg 1953). This distinguishes them from the great church societies of laymen and lay women, since these, even when organised on a nation-wide basis, rarely escape from the limitations of a single denomination. Consequently the new approach which is embodied in these new forms of work has an ecumenical relevance, since here is to be found a confrontation of Church and world in a fundamental and practical sense, and not merely a confrontation of the Lutheran, Anglican or Methodist Church with the world.

Distinctive examples of such modern lay movements, which are to be found in many countries and nearly all churches, are for instance Catholic Action with its manifold ramifications, the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, the lay conferences held in Europe and America under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, the lay movements in the Orthodox world, in particular the Zoë Movement in Greece, and the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchentag*, an enterprise which has grown so to speak out of nothing! All these activities are important, and helpful to many. But the actual *raison d'être* of laymen's work, the renewal of the Church through its mission to the world, transcends them all.

Notes on other Publications

THE POLITICAL-CULTURAL SCENE

1

Political responsibility. "The political responsibility of the Christian" was the title of a talk given to an international Catholic group by P. Laurac, of the *Economie et Humanisme* team, and reprinted in *EFFICACITÉ* (Nov. 1954). In it Father Laurac deplores the absence of an adequate civic sense, as evidenced in the failure of the modern press to accept its educational responsibility for the formation of public opinion, in the refusal of privileged classes to sustain public financing by loans, and in the egoism of professional groups that maintain their own privileges regardless of the real needs of the common good both in production and distribution. Christians who are critical of the moral quality of internal or international politics should be disturbed at the thought that in a democracy they bear responsibility for what is done, even if it is done without them.

Far from advocating that Christians should "take over" the state, Father Laurac holds up the ideal of government service on behalf of the moral and materials interests of political society, and insists on a real professional competence. To act on social structures requires more than just holiness. The Christian is right in insisting that the demands of conscience cannot be neglected, but these cannot be known independently of the economic and political context.

2

Sociology and Religion. Abbé Francois Houtart examines some of the effects of urban life on religious practice in a modest but suggestive article

in the Belgian *REVUE NOUVELLE* (March 1955). The Church would appear to have to make a greater effort to understand the changes that have accompanied the progressive urbanization of the world, and rediscover a greater freedom of adaptation. The author notes the greater socialization and secularization implicit in city life, as well as its changed rhythm, and insists on the paradox that whereas the Church structures are poorly adapted to the life of the day, its ministers and lay leaders have themselves fallen victim to its fever.

Houtart also contributes a study of Catholic religious practice in America in *LUMEN VITAE* (no. 3, 1954). He emphasizes the problems caused by the multi-racial structure of American Catholicism and the preponderance of the Irish among the clergy. He believes that the 1952 *CATHOLIC DIGEST* poll, estimating Sunday attendance at Mass at 62%, was much too optimistic. In a recent study of the New York archdiocese a figure of 30% was indicated, but Houtart believes both clergy and laity allow themselves illusions in regard to the real situation, and that the publication of the entire study would give a better sense of the problem. In fact, the author considers that despite the genuine merits of American Catholicism, a facile optimism often prevents it from facing its real problems.

Such an optimism would receive a further challenge from Father Joseph Fichter's *Social Relations in an Urban Parish* (Chicago). This study makes quite clear how unrelated is the modern city parish to the life of the parishioner. Father Fichter uses the image of the gas station, suggesting the non-personal and utilitarian tone even of the attitude

to religious services. Although the book is a product of genuine sociological research, and will undoubtedly have an importance in pointing towards further studies, some of the most valuable—and controversial—pages represent the reflections of the author who has a particular vision of Catholicism and understanding of possible future adaptation. It is perhaps just because of the success of these aperçus that the dominant effort to remain “scientific” can sometimes become wearying. Relevant to the whole book, for example, is an understanding of the “model parishioner”, which itself needs far more serious analysis than the statistical criteria employed are able to suggest. We need to know more of the concrete operations of the parishes in which these statistics were gathered. Criticism as to the absence of a *qualitative* sense of what it is like to be a church-going parishioner in these parishes is legitimate, whatever the sociological difficulties. We need to know the sermons, the social activities, the ways in which money was collected (and the relative emphasis on money), the quality of the parish school, the degree to which an attempt was made to help the faithful participate in the Mass, the degree to which laymen took responsibility for parish organizations, etc. It is only against such knowledge that we can properly appreciate the apathy, excuses, alibis, and genuine difficulties that lie behind the alarming percentage given for dormant parishioners.

3

Actualité religieuse. This informative bi-monthly remains a unique example of religious journalism. Recent issues have contained dossiers on the Church and colonialism (Feb. 1) and the Church and the H Bomb (May 1). The death of Père Teilhard de Chardin provided the occasion for reprinting a

brief article of his, along with a sampling of obituary comment. This and a summary of the Zurich Apologetical Institute's report on the persecution of Protestants in Colombia were also contained in the May 1 issue. The latter would appear to be the most serious study undertaken by a Catholic group on this subject, and emphasizes the political context in which Protestantism was identified with anti-government forces.

4

The McCarran Act. As might be expected, world opinion has interested itself in the United States immigration policy, and it would be fair to say that criticism coming from Catholic sources has been overwhelming. Concluding a series of articles in CIVILTA CATTOLICA (March 19, 1955) on “The un-American and anti-Christian spirit of the McCarran Act”, Father C. Giachetti, S.J., insisted on the right of peoples from over-populated areas to emigrate to lands that are under-populated. “It is particularly important for the United States, engaged as it is in the defense of the western world, to give an example by annulling the McCarran act and instead of the principle of discrimination in terms of national origin operate on the principle of the natural law, allowing the immigration of peoples of all races and all nationalities, within the framework of specific conditions.” In the same direction were the remarks of the apostolic delegate to Canada, Bishop Panico, reprinted in THE CATHOLIC MIND (April 1955).

5

Literature and belief. Martin Jarrett-Kerr's *Studies in Literature and Belief* takes up the influence of popular beliefs on the development of the ballad, the dramas of Calderon, Manzoni's *Betrothed*, Dostoyevsky and Ramuz. As

in his earlier *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence* (Philosophical Library)—in which it was rather pleasant to meet with a theological “annexation” of Lawrence but one felt that rather important distinctions were being blurred—there is much that is of value, and yet the literary work itself is never directly encountered. The author’s central thesis would appear to be that a writer should not allow his beliefs to interfere with the free creativity of the imagination, and he discusses Calderon’s *El Magico Prodigioso* to indicate that the climax has been pre-determined by dogmatic belief. Here again we meet with the typically modern insistence that inner tension is a supreme criterion of artistic greatness, which may mean nothing more than a certain historical provincialism as well as an understandable current distaste for Baroque certainties in art.

A more discriminating handling of the categories of literature and theology is evidenced in the compact and unpretentious article of Kenelm Foster, “Dante as a religious poet” (BLACK-FRIARS, Dec. 1954):

“... if one has to define Beatrice, one must start from the premiss that the Beatrician ‘idea’ in the poem is essentially relative: the relations going two ways, to Christ on the one hand, to Dante on the other. It would be false to say simply that she is to Dante what Christ is to mankind; for she does not replace Christ, she reflects and transmits him. In the world of the poet, in that interchange of private experience and universal symbol which we share through Dante’s imagination, Beatrice is the medium through which Dante receives Christ; a medium as unique as his personality. She is ‘quella che imparadisa la mia mente’; but all this ‘imparadising’ of his mind is an in-Christening of it through the medium and under the guidance of Beatrice.”

6

A Christian Economy (Macmillan). This book by William G. Peck is an interesting example of Anglican social thought, critical of the welfare state and attempting to make a serious use of Aquinas. The assumption is that a Christian economics is possible, and that the principles of it are in “the conception of an integrated wholeness which was the foundation of the great sociology taught by Christian doctors in the Middle Ages.” There is a valuable chapter on the Church’s retreat from its earlier position in “Usury in history and in religion”.

Dr. Peck outlines the following political and economic objectives: 1. the creation of a more balanced economy, with greatly increased British agriculture and a revival of the rural community; 2. regionalism and decentralization of government power; 3. a corporative or Guild structure in industry, involving the ownership of industries by their operators under the supervision of a State appointed authority.

7

Jung. Pantheon continues the publication of Jung’s Collected Works with *The Practice of Psychotherapy*, containing one of the most important of his later writings, “Psychology of the Transference”. Here one will find practical applications to familiar psychological situations rather than the more theoretical researches of the earlier volumes of the Works. Other materials will help explain Jung’s position with regard to medicine on one hand, and to theological and philosophical concerns on the other. His appraisal of the therapeutic value of abreactive techniques will be of special interest to moralists.

Josef Goldbrunner, a Catholic theologian and depth psychologist, reveals an

important debt to Jung in his slim but rewarding book, *Holiness is Wholeness* (Pantheon), already mentioned in these pages in the German edition. He recognizes the effect of modern ideas of health on Christian asceticism, and confronts the paradox embodied in the statements "Holiness is health" and "Holiness leads to disease"—it is resolved only on the Cross. Goldbrunner urges a more positive approach to the natural demands of the body, reminding us of St. Francis' tardy recognition, "I was too hard on Brother Ass". An ideal of holiness as the sum of all virtues imposes an oppressive imitation: "a man becomes spiritually ill when he lives against *his* truth". "A formation of life, which, though it may be ideal, is foreign to the soul, impedes the formation of the individual personality, makes it a lie, and leads to illness, neurosis." In the last part of the book Goldbrunner discusses the effects of faith, hope and charity on psychical health. Here again there are brief but significant insights, as in the interpretation of the often misused, "See how the birds of the air never sow, or reap, or gather grain into barns"; we are not here receiving a rash consolation, but are being exposed to total fear, and in the midst of this fear

we are to have the courage to let ourselves go and put our trust in another whom we have never seen.

8

Also noted. Reinhold Niebuhr and Richard Fagley discuss the Evanston Assembly's International Affairs report in *CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY* (Spring) . . . The April *BLACKFRIARS* contained F. H. Drinkwater's "Conversation on the Hydrogen Bomb" and Sir Desmond Morton's "Morality in International Relations". As in his recent *Commonweal* article, Father Drinkwater, while refusing a pacifist position, feels that a Christian has a moral obligation (whether as an individual or in the formation of national policy) to shun the use of mass-destruction weapons such as the A and H bombs . . . The same issue of *BLACKFRIARS* contains a perceptive commentary on the recent Italian films, by Maryvonne Butcher. She recognizes the implicit criticism they contain that religion and government are doing little to alleviate the human situation, salutes de Sica's *Umberto D* as a great film, requiring a new direction in future Italian efforts if they are not to appear as anti-climactic.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

1

From Protestantism to the Church. This is the English title of a work in French (published by Editions du Cerf) by Father Louis Bouyer which suggests by its depth, importance and ecumenical concern Newman's *Apologia*. The first 144 pages are concerned with demonstrating that the famous "Protestant" formulas, *sola fide*, *sola gratia*, *solus Deo gloria*, customarily reduced by Catholic preachers to a completely extrinsic conception of justification, are a

series of *positive* principles which originate in the most fundamental sources of Catholic truths. Salvation by faith alone did not mean for Luther and Calvin (or the most faithful Protestants after them) that man is not really justified, but simply that in salvation *nothing* comes from man, and that *everything* is the work of the all-powerful grace of God Himself, which, in Christ, saves us. Similarly, "to God alone be the glory" does not mean an *arbitrary* predestination with which Calvinism is often identified. Nor did the primacy

of Scripture initially signify the rejection of Tradition, but only the rejection of those "pseudo-traditions" which in the 16th century seemed to have "added" something to the unique Word of God in Christ Jesus.

These positive principles of the Reformation—which are, after all, vindicated by the Council of Trent—can aid modern Catholics to a useful examination of conscience. The author would appear to believe that there is a tendency to an excessively "humanistic" conception of religion, and that Catholics need to be reminded that they do not achieve their own salvation, that the sacraments are not magic but precisely the strongest of all affirmations that it is not man that saves man but God alone, in the rites to which he has attached the always living and always actual power of Christ the Saviour. Catholics ought to show more clearly that the cult of the saints is only one aspect of an essential vision, recognizing that it is the grace of God alone, though in a privileged manner in Mary, which saves; they should be more conscious of the privileged place of Scripture in all the acts of the Magisterium and in preaching.

Bouyer then addresses himself to the problem of how a religious movement whose central points of emphasis were traditional gave rise to a schism, and ultimately to heresy. He feels that Protestantism has allowed its conception of grace to be such as leaves man in his sin, and that in Barth's system God is forbidden to come to man. For Bouyer the Reform was insufficiently radical, because it was made with insufficiently criticized materials of the philosophical framework of nominalism. If God is relegated to a transcendence which makes him totally inaccessible to the world, and if on the other hand, no real relation between beings can be established, since they are prisoners of an

empirical psychologism, we can understand how the scholastic systematization of Protestantism came to speak of a grace which did not really justify and of a God who speaks without being able to be understood. This would help to explain how Protestantism in the course of time would oscillate between a rigid orthodoxy, in which God and salvation are completely unknowable, and a pragmatism of feeling and religious experience which would end in a Pelagianism which Luther wished to combat.

In the second part, the author sometimes uses violent formulas that may wound other Christians, but it is an immense love of the positive values of the Reformation that animates the book as a whole.

2

Liturgical Piety. Father Bouyer is also the author of this first volume of a projected series of books on liturgy to be published by the Notre Dame University Press, embodying the lectures given at the liturgical summer schools directed by Father Mathis. No less an authority than Josef Jungman, S.J., considers this a significant book which should perform a work similar to that achieved by the earlier *Spirit of the Liturgy* of Romano Guardini. In fact, a careful reading will make quite clear the remarkable progress achieved in both historical and theological studies of the sacraments in the 30 years since the appearance of Guardini's smaller study. Although rewarding, readers of Bouyer's earlier *Paschal Mystery* will be prepared for profound scholarship, some technical discussions, and a somewhat difficult style. Father Jungmann writes:

The "liturgical piety" of which this courageous book speaks does not signify a piety which clings to the letter of liturgical texts, nor, despite fre-

quent references to Dom Odo Casel, is it fully identifiable with piety as oriented towards the *Mysterium* in Casel's sense of that term. The concept of *Mysterium* is indeed central, but it has rather the meaning given it by St. Paul: It is God's Plan of Salvation, which was revealed and realized in time, with the Cross of Christ and His Resurrection as the climax; which, as the Word of God, calls the Church together and awakens in her the echo of thanksgiving; which, in the sacraments, makes possible our transition from the earthly world to the world of the Risen One. The original work of redemption is not really, therefore (as with Casel), regarded as being made present in the *cultus*, but the latter is looked upon as the extension of that re-newal of the world which began with the Cross and the Resurrection.

This majestic conception is then developed eloquently, and with ever new applications, in terms first of all of the Eucharistic celebration—the worship of hearing and responding to God's Word, the Eucharistic Prayer, and the consummation of the Sacrifice—then of the priestly ministry, the Sacraments of Initiation, the Church Year, and the Divine Office (pp. 70-242). Small wonder that the individual elements of the liturgy begin to shine with a new light, that the assembled community of the Church becomes significant, that the Psalms take on a powerful New Testament ring, that Easter once again becomes the Feast, and that an Easter-centered, grateful orientation of mind and heart appears as most fitting for a true Christian!

By way of introduction, the author in his characteristically spirited style sketches, in a few chapters, the historical background for the liturgical movement which our age seems called upon to achieve: a renewal orientated towards the ideas above mentioned, true to tradition, and yet readily adaptable to present conditions and needs. This historical sketch studies the piety of the Baroque period, the artificial restoration of the medieval liturgy at Solesmes and of the antique forms of art at Beuron, and the beginnings of the

modern liturgical movement in Belgium, Germany and France (pp. 1-69).

3

Plato. While the unsurpassed inexhaustibility of Plato's wisdom is one of the greatest treasures of Western philosophy and remains open to whoever is willing to read meditatively, the manifold seeds of truth lodged in the unwritten consciousness of its creator have taxed the competence and patience of philologists and the ingenuity of philosophers. The burden of Platonic scholarship is indeed heavy, and only a man who is committed to an integrity of both mind and heart will be capable of revealing some of the hidden recesses of Plato's wisdom. Recently three such men have added, collectively, a noteworthy contribution to Platonic scholarship: two have honored Plato directly by vigorous and capable reconstructions of his thought, and a third has risen in eloquent and solid defense of his thought and character against the modern detractors.

The first scholar whom we wish to discuss is Prof. Enrico Turolla, a distinguished philologist who is probably unknown to the English-reading world. It is regrettable and to some extent inexcusable that Italian scholarship in classical Greek philosophy should be largely unacknowledged only because it is unfamiliar, even to some of the most competent scholars, and that little if any attention should be directed to such fundamental and indispensable works as A. Guzzo's unsurpassed critical analysis of the *Theaetetus*, A. Carlini's lucid translation and perceptive commentary on the *Metaphysics* and L. Stefanini's exhaustive interpretation of the Platonic skepsis in his two-volume *Platone*. Enrico Turolla's contribution to Platonic scholarship is given in the form

of a brilliant translation and commentary of the complete Plato, published in an elegant yet highly functional 3-vol. edition under the title: *Platone, I Dialoghi, L'Apologia e le Epistole*, versione e interpretazione di Enrico Turolla; Rizzoli, Milano-Roma, 1953. The translation itself, although excellent, will not interest the English-speaking reader as much as the extremely perceptive interpretation.

The twenty odd years that Turolla has spent in a loving and laborious search for Plato's wisdom have yielded many rich and revealing insights. That rare virtue of humility, which is recommended as an indispensable motif for understanding Plato, Turolla himself admirably practises, as he offers us a dialectically elusive and essentially religious man whose full thought he never for a single moment presumes to know. This moral disposition becomes methodologically and philosophically fruitful the moment it is transformed into that metaphysical humility which treasures a profound sense of human inadequacy and insufficiency in the face of Divine Wisdom, yet surges, through a mounting convergence of motifs, both mythical and rational, poetic and dialectical, to that ineffable, apophatic vision of the Supreme One-God that constitutes the crux and apex of human experience.

Turolla insists on the Osiric-Pythagorean sources (both mythico-religious and mathematical) that he finds to be both explicit and latent in Plato's consciousness, and frequently evokes the remarkable affinity between his moral grandeur and such revealed and central Scriptural themes as 'The Just One Condemned' (especially pronounced in the *Gorgias*) and 'God is the measure of all things' which pervades the entire corpus of Plato's writings. While insisting on the 'transcendental' and 'idealistic' Eleatic-Pythagorean sources of Plato's philosophy Turolla yet dis-

patches once and for all the lingering misreadings of Plato as an 'idealist' obsessed with fear of 'grubby matter' and an incorrigible dualist of Manichean bent, in a vigorous and suggestive phrase of Augustinian inspiration: "... shadows are not deceptive; they are rather defective and inceptive." Plato does indeed urge that we escape from the world but such an escape is conditioned by a knowledge of precisely those aspects of the world, identified in theological language as "evil" and "the flesh", from which one ought to escape. In the final 'General Conclusion' Turolla focusses upon the 'Myth of the Sun' (*Rep.*, Bk. VI) as the most revealing and clearest expression of the fundamental message of Platonism; in conjunction with his insistence on the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* (which is, he believes, the key to the whole dialogue as the dialogue itself expresses the essence of Platonism)—that the One participates in no essence whatsoever, transcending as it does every principle of unity, essence and existence—he has released Plato from the rigid, 'logical' and sectarian categories into which his thought has so often been pressed, and has captured for us precisely that unfinished quality in which Plato's greatness most justly lies. Hence it is that Turolla explicitly acknowledges the unfinished character of his own interpretation precisely because Plato's philosophy is itself unfinished based as it is on his inexhaustible wisdom.

Indeed, the whole range of the *Dialogues* themselves should be read as prefaces and experienced as adumbrations of a wisdom that can be consummated only in an eschatological vision. In sum, it is utterly impossible to honor Turolla's long labour of love without reading his brilliant, eloquent and incisive commentary itself. Yet a final word concerning the organization of the books might encourage some to read

them: a long introduction, 'Oggettivismo e idee nel sistema Platonico' sets forth the framework within which Turolla moves through individual commentaries to each of the *Dialogues* to a final, synoptic 'General Conclusion'; an analytic index and a critical appendix of 'difficult terms in the philosophical language of Plato' serve as invaluable guides to a meditated reading of the text itself.

A remarkable and, to the student of Plato, highly encouraging convergence of minds on the meaning of the *Dialogues* may be seen in the recent book by the eminent French classical scholar, Pierre-Maxime Schuhl: *L'Oeuvre de Platon*, Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1954. In this little book of some 200 pages M. Schuhl has compressed the full weight of his vast knowledge of Greek culture in general and of Plato's philosophy in particular. We do not wish to force a concordance of texts where such may not be found; yet we cannot escape responding to what is there, and what we find at the very outset are these words: "Plato is without doubt the greatest name in the history of philosophy . . . He owes his preeminence to the richness and depth of his thought, to the extreme variety of those talents and gifts which are rarely united in the same degree in any one author." Turolla and Schuhl both display the happy faculty of eliciting focal points from the labyrinthine dialectic of the *Dialogues*, thus making possible a synoptic vision of the essential Plato. Schuhl too insists on the Pythagorean sources of Plato's philosophy, on the peculiar synthesis of a dialectic of love and a science of logic, on the decisive difference between the necessity and justice of a 'divinely inspired art and the unholy, unnecessary and inferior character of 'imitative' art (Turolla's analysis of the *Phaedrus* advances some of the most sensible ideas yet written on the nature

and meaning of art in Plato), on the reality of Ideas as presences (*parousia*) and not fictitious duplicates (Turolla speaks of the Idea as the *truth* of the thing); on the impossibility of systematizing Plato's philosophy and on the pre-eminent necessity of a 'certain metaphysical humour' in the attempt, forever futile, to express the Ineffable. M. Schuhl's critical analysis of the *Laws*, though brief, is well worth reading as it elicits focal points in that vexed dialogue; and the bibliography appended should neither be overlooked nor merely looked at.

The third book that we wish to note is by an American scholar, Prof. Ronald Levinson: *In Defense of Plato*, Harvard University Press, 1953. Prof. Levinson has undertaken the un-wanted and terribly exacting task of defending Plato against the unjust charges of his militant modern detractors—Chapman, Fite, Crossman and Winspear—whose composite views have been crystallized by Karl Popper in vol. I of *The Open Society and its Enemies* entitled 'The Spell of Plato.' The enviable range and textual precision of Levinson's scholarship, both historical and philosophical, serve as powerful instruments for destroying Popper's polemical obstinacy and propagandistic obsession. Apart from legitimate and defensible differences of philosophical beliefs, what cannot be excused, what must not go unchallenged is the distorted *mis-reading* of another man's written words. It is on this precise point that Levinson's work is eminently successful for he has shown, passage after passage, reference by reference, how Popper's Plato is based on a constant expanding and narrowing of the textual evidence to suit the waxing and waning of his private propagandistic purposes; and how Popper wrenches passages out of context, thereby yielding at best half-truths, at worst false generalizations. In sum, Levinson

has demonstrated how Popper's persistent perversion of Plato is simply a projection of his own private ideological aspirations, some of which may indeed be noble and well worth defending although they should never be substituted for the actual recorded thoughts and aspirations of another person. An historical work should be read neither apologetically nor polemically; neither should it be read as a monologue. Perhaps one ought not to be too severe with Popper, for one should not expect to find in a man trained in the analytical-logical categories of logical positivism the degree of complexity required for the exercise of that historical-mindedness that is indispensable for understanding the thoughts of another man. One great advantage of Levinson's historical-mindedness is its capacity to situate a given doctrine or outlook in its proper socio-political context without either condemning or justifying it. Hence it is that Plato's "aristocratic, anti-humanitarian, totalitarian" outlook on sex and marriage, slavery and manual labor, "democracy" and the common man falls into its proper historical place without committing either Levinson or any other Platonic scholar to those elements in Plato's thought which are open to criticism pre-

cisely because they are inextricably interwoven with those contingencies and accidentia which constitute the imperfections and perishability of the historical experience of the Greek city-state. Plato is not, indeed, infallible, nor did he, as Popper insists, deceptively betray the "great democratic, humanitarian, Socratic" tradition, nor again was he the totalitarian ghoul that Popper seems to enjoy describing. Moreover, granted the limitations of Plato's vision of man, his un-historical, 'essentialistic' orientation and his sympathy for the 'un-democratic' practises of Spartan society, the issue can still not be settled on a simple either/or, black-or-white basis: carefully documented reservations are required, and as they are gradually unfolded Plato again emerges as that complex, subtle and elusive figure that he is. M. Schuhl, who has devoted much time to the problem (as we know from his *Machinisme et Philosophie*), speaks of Plato's 'rehabilitation of the technical arts' in his later dialogues, despite a lingering aristocratic distaste for manual work, and even constructs 'a kind of philosophy of work', again despite some misunderstanding of technology which is, after all, not only a modern but a pressing contemporary problem.

HISTORY AND HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

A book that may be profitably read and linked with some of the problems already discussed while raising still new ones is H.-I. Marrou's *De la connaissance historique*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1954; M. Marrou should be known through his two major contributions to the understanding of classical antiquity: *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, and *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*. In his current book M. Marrou speaks as a philosopher meditating on the nature of

historical knowledge, in the tradition of Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften* and M. Weber's *verstehende Soziologie*. He exhibits a well justified distrust of historians such as Spengler and Toynbee who advance grandiose, artificial and somewhat unsupported schemes for interpreting the secret and prophetic sense of history, and professes a much needed and healthy skepticism about such enterprises. He proposes a more humble and far more fruitful 'radical nominalism', purely methodological in

character, and insists on the instrumental function of conceptual schemes for the understanding of the radically inexhaustible complexity and richness of the historical process. History is the matrix of manifold human activities which precisely because of their infinite interconnections and ineffable singularity can never be reduced to totally rational schemes; yet such a methodology need not lead to either total skepticism or unredeemable despair. On the contrary, its practise should provoke into existence that fundamental attitude of the historian towards his object which is one of trust in the intelligibility of history and faith in its ultimate and absolute eschatological meaning. Defining his own thoughts "in Platonic terms, as a dialectic of the Same and the Other", M. Marrou writes: "I can gain no knowledge of the other unless I make an effort to encounter him by forgetting, for a moment, what I am, by getting out of myself and opening my soul to him; I should like to borrow (at the risk of appearing somewhat pedantic) the concept of *epoché* (*Ausschaltung*) from contemporary phenomenology not, however, without introducing certain necessary changes . . . yes indeed, the encounter with the other presupposes and demands that we 'suspend ourselves', that we put ourselves in parenthesis and forget for the moment what we are so that we may open ourselves to the other . . . The experience of history, far from accommodating itself to haughtiness demands from us, indeed develops within us a constant and profound humility. History is an encounter with the other . . ."

The chapter entitled 'Conditions et moyens de la comprehension' ought to be required reading for all students and scholars who do any work whatsoever in historiography, which means, in effect, all serious and responsible stu-

dents. M. Marrou uses the word *sympathy* to describe the psychological disposition and moral virtue by which the historian rises to a connatural union with his object; and although the word has lost its pristine etymological vigour in English it still retains much power and noble meaning, especially in French since Bergson's unsurpassed phenomenological analysis of its metaphysical nature. Yet even *sympathy* is not enough for, as M. Marrou reminds us, "between the historian and his object there is a friendship which must be nourished if the historian wishes to understand for, in the beautiful words of St. Augustine, '*et nemo nisi per amicitiam cognoscitur.*'" Again, insisting on the indispensable role of the historian in historiography, we read: "The value of historical knowledge is directly proportional to the interior richness and openness of spirit of the historian. We professional historians, so proud of our technical competence, deformed as we are by years of specialization, by the almost superhuman effort we have had to expend in acquiring it, tend too easily to forget this . . . The historian must be above all a whole man, open to everything human . . ." In the light of Marrou's insistence on the connaturality and *verstehen*-character of historical knowledge one might suspect a certain distrust of the technical, critical apparatus of historical research. Not at all, for not only does M. Marrou emphasize the utter necessity of such knowledge but offers some concrete and helpful suggestions on the nature and procedures of historiographical research. While history without documentation may be called empty, documentation without history may be described, somewhat paradoxically, as blind.

A profound sensitivity to 'the irreducible ambiguity' of history marks every line of Marrou's book, and gives it that

poignancy that is born only of a spirit that is responsive to the humanly irreparable deficiencies and limitations of man: this attitude finds a systematic and eloquent expression in the chapter entitled 'L'explication et ses limites.' One final quotation might serve as a logical link with the next book that we propose to discuss: "The historical man knows that he cannot know everything, he never takes himself for anything more than a man and accepts, with simplicity, the fact that he is not God; he knows in part, through his little mirror, in a limited and often obscure manner. But he knows that he does not know, he ponders and identifies the immense range of things that escape him, and thereby acquires a keen sense of the complexity of being and of the situation of man in their tragic ambivalence."

The tragic ambivalence of historical man, burdened with "an anthropological duality, two-fold if not actually ambiguous in nature, a center of co-existing antinomies" constitutes the *leitmotiv* of the richly suggestive reflections of the distinguished Rector of the University of Bologna, Felice Battaglia: *Morale e Storia nella prospettiva spiritualistica*, C. Zuffi, Bologna, 1954. Prof. Battaglia is deeply convinced of the central rational-irrational dialectic which both supports and explains the tensions, anxieties and frustrations of human existence: "Man cannot be defined in purely rational terms, as only a rational animal; he must be defined rather as a center of co-existing rational-irrational forces, as that being who wishes to conquer the irrational yet is never able to dominate it completely since error is forever corroding the truths discovered and sin is constantly disturbing the good achieved." Every human accomplishment leaves a persistent residue of unfulfilment, and every residue provokes a new quest in a cease-

less unfolding of the structural dimensions of historical experience—economic, juridical, political, religious—which no human power can either arrest or enclose without destroying that free, creative activity of the human spirit which is the very mainspring of the historical drama. Only a 'metaphysics of the spirit', ineradicably historical because Christian, can serve as an adequate philosophical foundation for the new anthropology which will challenge the primacy of cosmological and intellectual categories of Aristotelian inspiration: "The first men interested in history were St. Paul and St. Augustine: anti-intellectualistic as they are, they speak of guilt and sin, of fall and salvation; and instead of proposing pre-fabricated solutions they speak rather of solutions experienced and suffered, through the merit of both Christ and man."

Those familiar with the historical sociology of Don Luigi Sturzo will recognize in Battaglia a sympathetic and discerning disciple, as he himself acknowledges in the chapter 'Verso una nuova sociologia', that focusses Sturzo's original and vital contribution to a rebirth of Italian sociology "which from positivistic has finally become spiritualistic" (a parallel theme is pursued by Marrou and developed in the form of a definitive criticism of the older positivistic 'eventocentric' historiography).

A spiritual affinity with both Marrou and Battaglia will be found in Reinhold Niebuhr's new book, *The Self and the Dramas of History*, Scribner's, New York, 1955. Niebuhr agrees with Battaglia in viewing history as "ambiguous, if not to its end, then at least to the present moment", and in situating the precise center of the historical drama in the humanly unresolvable tensions between man the spiritual creature of God and man the moral creator of the

historical process. Our three authors agree with equal vigour on the essentially spiritual and un-redeemably fragmentary character of man's nature and

achievements and on the revolutionary uniqueness and dramatic novelty of Biblical revelation as the most fruitful source for understanding history.

hochland

Zeitschrift für alle Gebiete des Wissens und der Schönen Künste

Begründet von Carl Muth; herausgegeben von F. J. Schöningh

"Ein halbes Jahrhundert lang ist Hochland für die Grundsätze wahrer Religion eingetreten und kann mit Recht für sich beanspruchen, dass es im Angesicht böser und gefährlicher Bedrückung in den schwierigsten Jahren sich nicht beugte, sondern aufrecht stehen blieb."

LORD FRANCES PAKENHAM, London

"Hochland ist heute stärker denn jemals zuvor. Es behandelt die grossen, brennenden Zeitprobleme in einer Weise, dass man sich auf Jahre hinaus nicht nur an einen, sondern an viele seiner Beiträge erinnert. Es ist die beste Zeitschrift, die ich je gelesen habe, und ich stehe mit diesem Urteil keineswegs allein da."

GEORG N. SHUSTER, *President of Hunter College, New York*

"Fern von jeglichem extravaganten Progressivismus scheint mir das Hochland den christlichen Menschen heute aus einer bloßen Verteidigungsstellung heraus in die Freiheit zu führen, die das unbeschränkte Vertrauen auf die Kirche und die in ihr wirkende Gnade ermöglicht."

ROLAND HILL, "*The Tablet*", London

"Interessant zu beobachten ist der Nachkriegseinfluss des Hochland, dem es gelungen ist, sein hohes geistiges Niveau zu halten."

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